Action | Adventure | Arcade | Board | Family | Music | Puzzle | Racing | Sports | Strategy | Trivia | RPG

Volume 1

iPad & iPhone Games Directory

BRAND NEW FOR iOS 5

★★★★★

Your guide to the best games for the iPhone & iPad



374
iPad & iPhone games inside

iPad & iPhone Games Directory™

iOS 5 APPS INSIDE

Welcome

Gaming on iPhone and iPad has come a long way from when each of these devices first launched, and in these pages you'll see just how far they've come from those days.

With fantastic journeys to faraway worlds, feats of sporting greatness at your fingertips or just a few brain-teasers to pass the time, you'll find a game for every kind of occasion here.

Every app you'll see here offers a unique experience that you would never find anywhere else, making the best use of your iPhone and iPad.

Jonathan Gordon

Our top five



Infinity Blade
£3.99/$5.99
Battle monsters and become a hero.
Page 37



N.O.V.A. 2
£4.99/£6.99
Amazing space combat on your phone.
Page 43



The Secret Of Monkey Island
£1.99/$2.99
Classic adventure gaming.
Page 25



World Of Goo
£2.99/$4.99
Get the goo home and beat this ingenious game.
Page 75



Real Racing HD
£0.69/$0.99
One of the great racing games on iPad.
Page 114

iPad & iPhone Games Directory™

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IMAGINE PUBLISHING

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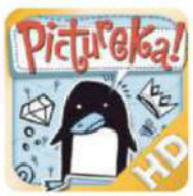



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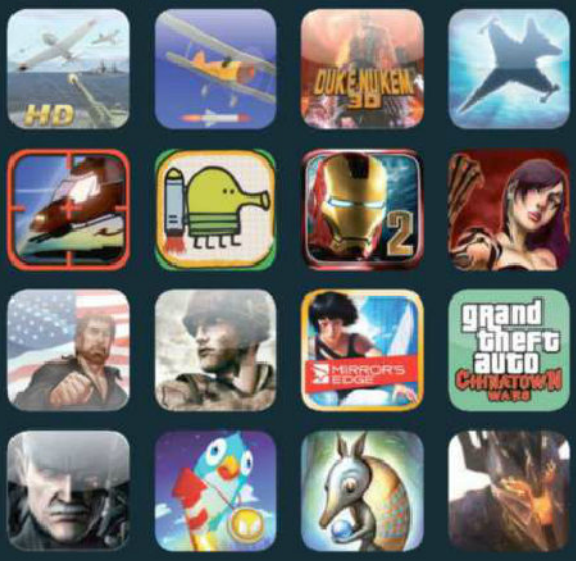




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Action



Packing a mighty punch in a very small package, the action games genre is one of the most impressive on iPhone or iPad and has seen some superb releases. These games are great examples of the leaps being made.

Top Paid Apps	Top Free Apps
Sid Meier's Pirates! for iPad ★★★★★	F.A.S.T. ★★★★★
Brothers In Arms: Hour Of Heroes ★★★★	MetalStorm: Online ★★★★★
Doodle Jump ★★★★★	

Staff pick of the section

Mirror's Edge ★★★★½	Minigore ★★★★½



As well as the versus mode, online play allows you to team up with a friend to play co-operatively against the AI planes.

Price: Free **Developer:** Z2Live Inc

MetalStorm: Online

Take to the skies with this impressive air combat sim



If you've ever played and enjoyed a console based action/flight game, then MetalStorm: Online may seem like a very tempting app. Featuring some high-end 3D visuals and fast open-air action, it looks and plays just like a proper console game, allowing you to engage in some exciting Top Gun-style dogfights as you chase enemy planes and take them down with a series of gun shots and lock-on missiles.

There's no throttle or control stick on the device you're playing on, but the developer thankfully resists the urge to plaster the screen with virtual controls. There are on-screen buttons for the weapons and acceleration, but the movements of your plane are controlled through the tilt sensor in the iPad, leaving the screen space clear for you to see what's going on.

All but the most basic of planes are locked out unless you spend real money on the tokens necessary to buy them, and the best ammunition is also limited, meaning that you have to keep paying out if you want beat other players online.

Rating ★★★★½

Price: £1.49/$1.99 **Developer:** Konami Digital Entertainment GmbH

Metal Gear Solid Touch

Solid Snake in the palm of your hand



Hideo Kojima's first iPhone game caused plenty of controversy when it was first announced, mainly because Xbox fanboys thought it was a new game for Microsoft's 360. Their loss is our gain, however, for Metal Gear Solid Touch proves to be an interesting take on the lightgun-styled games that are constantly popping up on Apple's machine. Even if it's not quite as sophisticated as we were hoping from the director of Konami's insanely popular franchise.

Loosely based on events from Metal Gear Solid 4, you basically have to shoot down a set amount of enemy soldiers before you can move on to the next stage. The difference here is that rather than simply tap on enemies to kill them you have to guide a reticule over them, meaning that the same degree of skill that can be found in normal lightgun games is present.



The soldiers that you'll face later in the game require several hits to kill so you'll find yourselves tapping the screen wildly.

Pinch the screen and you can switch between weapons, tap the screen to shoot and taking your finger off will allow Snake, our aging hero, to hide behind cover and eventually recover life. It's an extremely fluid system that's further enhanced by some truly impressive visuals and plenty of familiar music and sound effects from the Metal Gear Solid world.

Indeed, Metal Gear Solid Touch's visuals still look cutting edge, especially on the iPhone's razor-sharp screen, despite the fact that the game was released some time ago now. Animation is limited but very effective, backgrounds are beautifully drawn, while effects like smoke and dust cling to the screen giving Kojima's game a really immersive feel.

Yes, you could argue that it's not going to take long to blast through the game and the gameplay itself can be incredibly simplistic at times, but that's a fault of this style of game rather than any issues on Kojima Productions' part.

It's certainly not the Metal Gear Solid we were expecting, but this is a perfectly enjoyable take on an age-old genre and Kojima and the rest of his team should be commended for coming up with such an enjoyable and easy-to-use interface. Fans of Snake will not be disappointed as this app presents a stylish and enjoyable extension to Snake's espionage action that we have all played to death on the consoles. If you grew up with Snake on PlayStatio or just fancy some warzone action, then check this out.

Rating ★★★★½



Pinching the screen will allow you to swap between weapons, meaning you'll be able to snipe out-of-range opponents.



Metal Gear Solid Touch's visuals look superb and easily capture the spirit of the PlayStation 3 game on which it is loosely based.





Armado has all the fun that a jumping armadillo can offer, and that's quite a lot!

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Tricky Software

Armado

Adventure calls the armadillo, will you answer?



Armado is an armadillo who is both tough and quick, and it's your job to guide him through various perilous levels in this enjoyable game from Tricky Software. Platform games are a difficult market on the iPhone because of the lack of physical buttons, but *Armado* manages to get around this by using the accelerometer for controlling Armado's direction and a single screen tap to make him jump. This is an incredibly enjoyable app and a lot of fun to play and there is some nice diversity on display in the levels that you must traverse – which include woodlands, snowy peaks and, as platform fans will be all-too aware, the obligatory 'fire' level! Getting the timing right for jumps is a little bit tricky to begin with and can cause a bit of frustration, but that's all part of the fun. If you're wary of spending the money then you can try a Lite version for free that'll adequately whet your appetite. Not an all-time favourite, but very enjoyable all the same.

Rating ★★★★½



Fighting is enjoyable throughout and has far more depth than it has any right to.

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Gameloft S.A

Assassin's Creed: Altair's Chronicles

The path of the assassin stretches to the iPhone



There are sceptics out there who claim the iPhone isn't capable of being a handheld gaming device; Assassin's Creed is the perfect evidence against such cynicism. This is easily one of the best 'traditional' games to appear on Apple's gadget. It sees Altair hunting down an artefact known as 'the chalice' in the hope of bringing The Crusades to an end. Controlling our protagonist with the ever more common on-screen stick and buttons, it's remarkably easy to get comfortable with and only enhances the experience. Whether using stealth to creep past enemies or encountering them head-on, it's surprising how solid Assassin's Creed is on every level and a credit to Gameloft. Not only a great game in its own right, but also proof of the potential the iPhone has of being a gaming platform.

It's also worth noting that a HD version is available for iPad that looks just as stunning and plays just as well.

Rating ★★★★½

Price: £6.99$9.99 **Developer:** Rockstar Games, Inc

Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars

Big trouble in little Chinatown

It's fair to say that Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars has endured a rather painful transition from Nintendo's DS to Apple's iPhone, and has been forced to sacrifice some key elements along the way. However, despite the changes, it's without a shadow of a doubt one of the most well-made and essential purchases currently available on the App Store.

The most obvious shortcoming is the controls; the on-screen D-pad and buttons simply don't work as well as the standard physical interface, and the combat targeting system is occasionally infuriating. The lack of a second screen for the map – something which was present throughout in the DS original – is also unfortunate, but thankfully the negative points end there. In practically every other department, Chinatown Wars is a complete success. The size of the city you tirelessly stalk around is immense and always impressive, and the sheer scope of the gameplay is often awe-inspiring; needless to say, if you're already a fan of this deliciously immoral series –and you probably are – then picking this up really is a complete no-brainer.

The plot is the usual story of revenge, double-crosses and cold-blooded murder, but it's fleshed out with countless colourful characters, witty dialogue, thought-provoking mission objectives and plenty of opportunities to customise the experience to your own personal taste. As always, the variety of assignments helps to keep things feeling fresh and exciting; one moment you're hunting down a rival gang in a volatile turf war and the other you're dressed as dragon for an extravagant Chinese street festival.

The visuals are also vastly improved over the previous Nintendo version, and are just about on par with the updated PSP edition – what makes this such an incredible achievement is that it's running on more pocket-friendly hardware. Granted, it's a tad on the pricey side compared to most other iPhone apps, but when you consider that other handheld owners had to shell out over twice as much for this mobile masterpiece, it seems almost ungrateful to grumble.

Rating ★★★★★



Causing destruction in Chinatown Wars is easy – but getting away from the cops is slightly more demanding, so be careful before discharging your



Get behind the wheel of a fast enough car and you can perform all kinds of cool stunts, many of which are acknowledged by Chinatown Wars' in-game



Operations like jump-starting a car and reloading a sniper rifle make use of the iPhone's touch-screen display in cool and inventive ways.

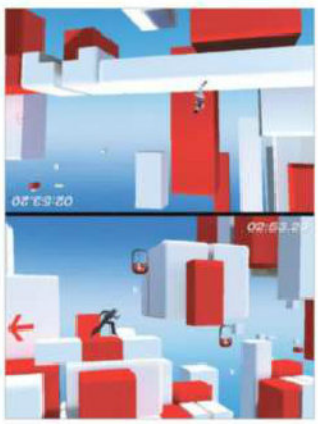
Price: £2.99$4.99 **Developer:** Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

Mirror's Edge

Sometimes you've just got to have Faith



2009 saw many of us lose hours to two running games. The first was the original Mirror's Edge, in which you guided free-runner Faith as she bounded across beautiful cityscapes on the PS3 and XBox 360. The second was Canabalt, a wonderfully simple platformer that only required you to keep running and jumping for as long as you could physically keep up the pace.



The split screen multiplayer pits you and an adversary at each end

In bringing Mirror's Edge to the iPad, EA takes everything that made the original so great – the vertigo-inducing ballet of leaps, slides and flips as Faith races across rooftops, cranes and ledges – and simplifies it until it becomes the same compulsive speed-run that makes Canabalt so addictive and such a huge hit.

You command Faith's entire repertoire with just one finger. A swipe starts you running, a swipe in the opposite direction sends you doubling-back; flick up to jump, flick down to roll gracefully as you land. Similar actions will have you wall-running, swinging from flagpoles, disarming or knocking down gun-toting hench-men or zip-lining from skyscraper to skyscraper while a helicopter sprays machine-gun bullets in your direction. Quite why you're being fired upon, as you race over rooftops or through underground lairs, is the subject of an involved, and largely needless storyline; all you really need to remember is to run, and keep running. That said, the plot is only a short one and you'll be lucky to get two hours of gameplay out of the story mode before it's over. Luckily, the speed-runs will have you revisiting your favourite levels again and again, as you frustratingly chase the red shadow runner of your former run to shave precious seconds from your best time.

Rating ★★★★½



The red haze; a blaze of gunfire from the helicopter. These are all signs that things are not going too well for Faith.



The visuals truly are wonderful, giving a fantastic sense of scale.



Yup, Faith's leaping onto a rooftop covered in armoured cops and a gunship, but there's not much she can do about



It's possible to block and counter your opponent's moves.



Surprisingly the virtual D-pad works perfectly using touch controls.

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Gameloft S.A.

Blades of Fury

A polished and feature-packed beat-'em-up



Gameloft must have some voodoo hidden up its sleeves. Against all odds it's managed to craft what's possibly the best control scheme for a beat-'em-up on the iPhone. The game offers the choice of a virtual joystick or D-pad for movement, with buttons on the right-hand side of the screen to control your attacks and defences. Using these it's easily possible to build up special attacks and combos. There are ten characters to choose from, each with their own set of weapons and moves. The game offers story, arcade, survival and practice modes, plus a multiplayer mode allowing two players to battle over Wi-Fi or Bluetooth. As you may have noticed from the screenshots on this page, the graphics are polished and sublime, and thankfully everything runs at a steady frame rate. Put simply, this is one of the greatest straightforward one-on-one fighting games to be found in the App Store and is perhaps only second to the mighty Infinity Blade in terms of looks, feel and addictiveness.

Rating ★★★★★





Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Prodigy Design Limited

Bird Strike: Gold Edition

Try not to get yourself in a flap, there's a pretty boy



Sometimes the simplest concepts are the most instantly appealing, and Bird Strike certainly ranks as pretty straightforward; you merely have to launch a bird up the screen and ensure he gets as high as possible. However, this bird isn't really a natural flier, and the initial fling will only get him so far into the air, which means you will have to utilise the various rockets dotted around the sky to gain additional height. Once you've reached the apex of the jump, your baby-blue feathered friend gets zapped by a passing UFO, and the race is on to hit as many collectible objects as possible to expand your score, using the iPhone's tilt function. Progress to the next level is determined by how many points you accrue, so Bird Strike soon becomes a desperate race to clock as high a score as you can. The trial-and-error gameplay can prove curiously unfulfilling at times, but on the whole it offers up plenty of wing-flapping enjoyment at an affordable price. Sure, he may not be the most famous of birds on iOS, but for addictive, simplistic gameplay this takes some ruffling.

Rating ★★★★★



Chuck is capable of some pretty incredible feats of strength – such as using a car as a weapon, as seen here.

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Takehiro Ishibashi

Chuck Norris: Bring On The Pain!

Gaming has a near-Chuck Norris experience



The whole 'Chuck Norris Facts' internet phenomenon may have run its course now, but that hasn't stopped a series of shameless cash-ins, this mobile game included. Calling to mind the classic 2D fighters of yesteryear, Chuck Norris: Bring On The Pain! certainly looks the part. The visuals are detailed and colourful, and there's lots of neat animation to feast your eyeballs on.

The gameplay isn't half bad, either; Chuck has a wide range of offensive options including guns, cars and – of course – his fists. You can upgrade Chuck's power between missions by entering the Dojo and using credits accrued during your adventure. Sadly though, the appeal of Bring On The Pain! diminishes faster than Chuck's acting career and, within the space of a few hours, it feels very much like a one-joke game. If you're after some mindless entertainment then by all means give Chuck a spin; just don't expect this to provide endless hours of fun.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Gameloft S.A.

Brothers In Arms: Hour Of Heroes

A popular console game on your iPhone



This is a port of a massively popular console franchise from Ubisoft which is doing rather good business on iOS too. Not only does the first-person action work extremely well, but the ability to complete actions using the accelerometer adds a whole new dimension. Brothers In Arms sees you take on the role of a soldier from World War II and it will have you battling it out in various war zones across Europe. The controls are fairly straightforward: you have a directional circle on the left of your iPhone's screen to move around with, and a Fire button and Grenade button on the right of the screen. It takes a little while to get used to the game's controls as there's no tactile feedback like you get with a standard gamepad. The graphics in Brothers In Arms are top-notch, as is the sound, and for the money you're guaranteed a great iPhone gaming experience that superbly brings the big bangs of a console game in your hand.

Rating ★★★★★



Get in among the action with this fast-paced app.





The main character looks fantastic but enemies and civilians are a little less

The opportunity to take to the skies is welcome but the vast empty environments don't really offer much excitement.

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Gameloft S.A.

Iron Man 2

This one should have stayed in the cinemas



Tony Stark's robotic alter-ego may be sporting a shiny new paint job in his last big-budget Hollywood outing, but this iPhone adaptation feels rusty and tired, with little in the way of original content or innovation. Above-average presentation fails to hide the woeful shortcomings of the gameplay, which is incredibly basic and not at all challenging. The controls range from workmanlike to frustrating, and the samey combat does little to draw you in; the biggest contest is between the player and the in-game camera, which never seems to give you a clear view of your enemies.

The ability to upgrade a multitude of different Iron Man suits is a nice touch, and the presence of secondary character War Machine will have comic book fans salivating, but ultimately Iron Man 2 is a very ordinary action title which should only be purchased by die-hard fans of the titular superhero.

Rating ★★☆☆☆





You spend much of the game staring at Tehra's perfectly-formed buttocks, which can be a bit of a

The graphics really are sumptuous but, sadly, there's very little meat on the bone

Price: £2.49/$3.99 **Developer:** StormBASIC S.L.

Tehra Dark Warrior

A scantily clad sword-swinging slog-fest



If looks could kill then Tehra Dark Warrior would instantly slay anyone brave enough to play it; the graphics are truly gorgeous, with highly detailed sprites, impressive effects and vast, sprawling fantasy environments. Even the lead character is an eyeful, with plenty of flesh on display and ample assets to appreciate. Sadly, the beauty is only skin-deep, because under all the glitz and glamour Tehra Dark Warrior is actually a very ordinary and unexciting hack-and-slash epic.

The button-mashing combo system is repetitive, and the magical spells do little to alleviate the boredom. Aside from some mildly impressive boss encounters, the whole thing is staler than a pair of orc's underpants, and it proves once and for all that even the most attractive game needs solid and dependable gameplay.

Rating ★★☆☆☆

iPhone & iPad | Action

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Chillingo Ltd

Minigore

All action assault with a touch of humour



Pick-up-and-play gaming has returned to the iPhone at last. While we're always excited to see apps that push the boundaries of portable gaming, there's still a lot to be said for games you can instantly get involved in. Minigore is one such game; simple, effective and great looking.

You take on the role of John Gore who has to defend himself from onrushing creatures named 'Furries' of which there are several different types. One bite from a Furry sees damage done to your character, allow a second and you're Furry food.

Control-wise, Minigore provides two pads at the lower left and right of the screen when held horizontally. The left controls the character's movement, while the right fires and aims your gun. As game controls go, this is the perfect method for the type of frantic survival tactics you'll need when playing Minigore and the game reacts well and plays fluidly.

Concentration and a cool head are required as the Furries get bigger and more numerous. Four different enemies are ready to take a bite out of John Gore: the Minifurry, Furry, Giant Furry and the Firefurry. As you progress you'll find four-leaf clovers, three of which will offer you a burst of invincibility. Aside from your machine gun, you can also collect a shotgun which does a decent amount of damage. Weapons appear as crates which you'll find scattered around the landscape and they can also be used as a handy explosive device when repeatedly shot which can reduce the pressure as things get hectic.

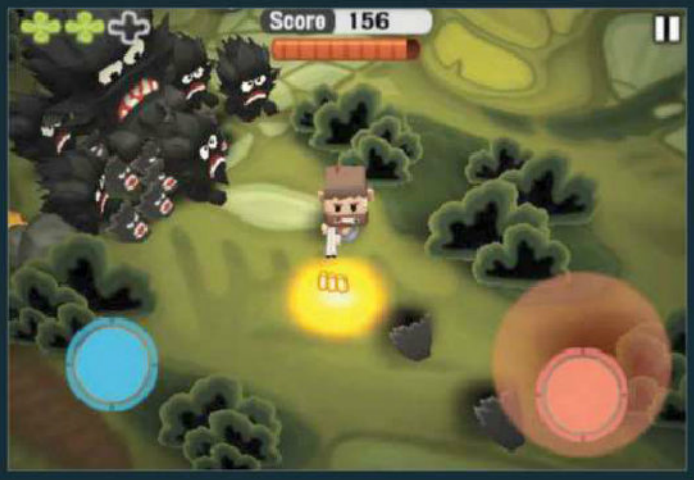
This is a true pick-up-and-play game. Easy to get into, hard to put down. When you start playing, you may think you'll tire of the same map, weapons and features but, just wait until you realise Minigore has taken so much of your time that you haven't eaten in three days. Regardless, the game is due for an update anyway, with episode two already submitted to the App Store boasting new abilities and save/restore features and episodes three and four are on their way with multiplayer among other updates.

All this and the application is still only 69p ($0.99), which makes Minigore even easier to get hooked on. iPad owners can also get stuck into a full-throttle HD version too, which is well worth the £1.49/$1.99 admission fee and naturally looks just as good on that gorgeous screen as this version does on an iPhone.

Rating ★★★★★



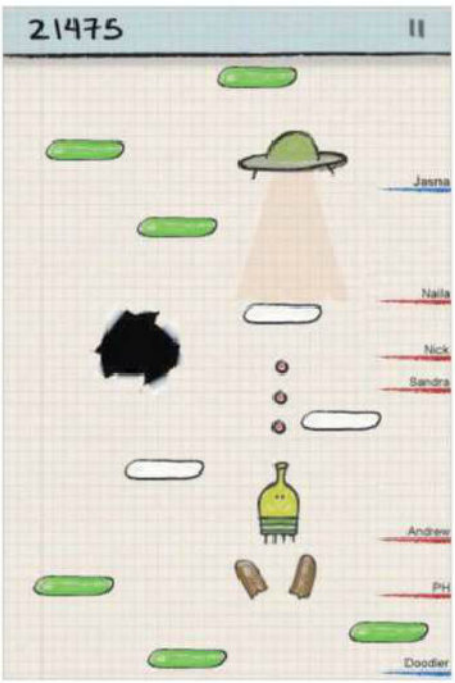
Minigore is pick-up-and-play gaming at its best on the iPhone, with you playing the role of square-headed hero John Gore.

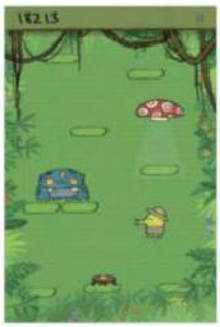


As well as having a machine gun, you can do some damage with a shotgun.



The blue pad controls John Gore's movement, the red pad one aims his gun.





Different themes are available but the core gameplay remains the same.

Hit the platforms and avoid the bad guys to post that record-breaking score.

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Lima Sky, LLC

Doodle Jump

Jump to it with one of the most addictive games ever



It's often the case that the most incredibly addictive games are the ones which boast the most basic of concepts, and that is certainly true of Doodle Jump. The objective of this lighthearted action title is to get your character – known as The Doodler – as high up the screen as possible. This is achieved by tilting your device to ensure The Doodler lands on the many floating platforms which dot the sky. You'll also have to contend with various enemies – which range from bug-eyed monsters to scary UFOs – but, thankfully, The Doodler comes equipped with a cannon in his nose for eradicating such threats.

With an undeniable 'just one more go' appeal and the ability to post scores to Facebook and Twitter, it's little wonder that Doodle Jump has gone on to sell millions. This is a must-have game for the iPhone and should be downloaded with hesitation – just be warned that chores will suffer and conversations will tail-off mid-sentence as you become entranced by The Dooler's allure.

Rating ★★★★★





The FMV visuals may make the game a little linear, but the on-screen action does keeps you on your toes.

Retro gamers may recall that Cobra Command was a launch title for Sega's ill-fated Mega CD console.

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Revolutionary Concepts

Cobra Command

A retro classic re-enters the skies



Those of you who remember the Laserdisc title Dragon's Lair – which, incidentally, is also available on the iPhone – will be instantly at home with this retro classic. Placed in the cockpit of a high-tech attack chopper, it's your mission to eliminate a terrorist threat across several different locations. It's just like playing a cartoon from the 1980s, with traditional hand-drawn animation and a cheesy soundtrack to match.

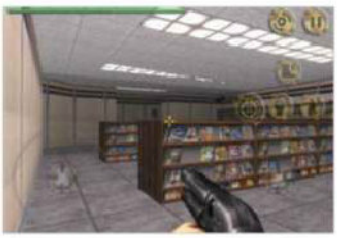
However, because you're controlling the chopper's guns and missiles – as well as occasionally steering to avoid obstacles – it feels a lot more involving than most full-motion video titles. The only niggle is that the controls take quite a bit of getting used to, but thankfully the training mode explains things in a reassuringly robust fashion. It might not be to everyone's tastes, but Cobra Command is well worth a look if you seek an action title with a difference and it contains just enough retro charm to keep you gunning away for a few hours, more than justifying the price tag.

Rating ★★★★½

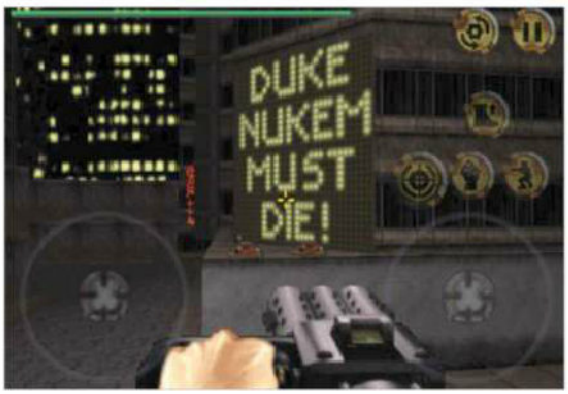
Duke Nukem 3D

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** MachineWorks Northwest LLC

It's time to kick ass and chew bubble gum







Can you guess what the two control sticks are meant to represent?



A perfect port of the original Duke Nukem PC game – one-liners and humour fully intact – this is a classic example of when control methods don't quite live up to expectations.

The game offers the choice of analogue or digital on-screen controls, the analogue controls bordering the screen as buttons and the digital method appearing as two control sticks – one for movement and one for aiming. Problems arise when trying to slide the control sticks. The game has trouble registering the movement of your fingers across the screen, resulting in frustrating taps to get Duke to move.

But even with the problems listed above, it's hard not to be charmed by this shooter. Duke makes for an engaging frontman, who spits-out one-liners like melon pips and the game offers a great deal of freedom to explore, so there are always cool surprises to uncover. And with all three original episodes of the game, and four difficulty levels, there's a wealth of gameplay to enjoy here.

Rating ★★★½☆

Price: Free **Developer:** SGN

F.A.S.T. You can be my wingman any time, Maverick



Fighter pilots may run the risk of being vaporised by heat-seeking missiles or blacking out during high-speed turns, but as a profession it's undeniably cool, and is right up there with being an Astronaut or F1 driver. F.A.S.T. – which stands for Fleet Air Superiority Tactics, in case you were wondering – manages to replicate the thrills and spills of jet fighter combat with considerable aplomb. Controlled using a savvy combination of the iPhone's accelerometer and touch-screen, F.A.S.T. breaks the player in slowly before offering up trickier mission objectives. However, as good as the single-player side of things is, it's the multiplayer modes which will really get your afterburners blazing. Both online and Bluetooth connectivity are supported and the presence of a score ranking system further expands the appeal of this digital Top Gun simulation. Polished visuals and impeccable presentation round off a superlative package which shouldn't be missed.

Rating ★★★★★



A range of different aircraft are up for grabs, provided you're skilled enough to unlock them.



The visuals in *F.A.S.T.* rank as some of the finest yet seen on iPhone.

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** 2K Games

Sid Meier's Pirates! for iPad

Take to the high seas as an old classic sails into its new home

While iDevices are known for their revivals of classic games, this isn't the 1987 edition of Sid Meier's Pirates! that you may remember, but the lesser known 2004 remake. The app features much better visuals than the original and it retains the gameplay that made Meier's simulation so popular to begin with.

For those who've never played Pirates!, expect a deep and varied experience that's initially overwhelming, but proves to be fun and compelling. It essentially gives you the entire Caribbean to explore and conquer by sailing around, trading with the islands you reach, recruiting crew members, battling other ships and invading settlements. In practice, this means a lot of different mini-games, the highlight of which is the land battles. Massively improved for the remake, these turn-based sections are especially well suited to the iPad format and the careful, thoughtful way in which touchscreen games can be played.

There's also a new mini-game in which you can romance the governor's daughter by dancing with her, each piece of footwork gaining you favour with the heiress of your dreams… assuming you've earned a high enough rank and bought enough smart clothes to win an invitation to the dance in the first place.

The real brilliance of Pirates! is that it's entirely up to you whether you indulge in all the aspects of its world or just pick bits and pieces to do. The original was a true pioneer, offering you a seemingly infinite number of possibilities to play with, and this update retains that, while also making it palatable and playable on the iPad.

Rating ★★★★★



Don't be fooled into thinking you can explore this bar in full. It's really just a menu where you touch the person you want to talk to.



Some of the mini-games are extremely simple in execution, and perfectly suited to the iPad's touchscreen.

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Capcom Co Ltd

Ghosts 'n Goblins Gold Knights

Another old-school Capcom classic rises from its grave



Fearsome boss characters wait at the end of each level; watch for their attack pattern before lunging in with your sword.



Capcom's Ghosts 'n Goblins series is a certified retro classic, with a well-deserved reputation for being as tough as old boots despite the doggy life you get each time your hero gets hit and loses his armour. Given its proclivity for intense difficulty and the need for lightning-fast reactions, bringing this esteemed series to the iPhone – a platform which lacks traditional physical controls – doesn't seem like the greatest idea ever. Thankfully, Gold Knights manages to replicate the vintage gameplay on Apple's device with a surprising amount of success. The graphics are above-average – mimicking the 3D visuals seen in the brilliant Sony PSP outing – but it's the demanding gameplay that really steals the show. The on-screen controls can occasionally prove irksome, and the level design isn't quite as good as it's been in previous titles, but Gold Knights is a commendable effort which should be downloaded by retro enthusiasts everywhere.

Rating ★★★★½

Gangstar: West Coast Hustle







Combat and shooting biatches is easy thanks to Gangstar's solid lock-on controls.

Vehicles are accelerometer based and require a hell of a lot of time to get used to.

Price: £2.99/$4.99 Developer: Gameloft S.A.

Gameloft achieves the impossible dream: GTA on the iPhone



We're seeing it but we still can't quite believe it. Gameloft has created an amazing GTA clone for the iPhone. Forget the top-down efforts that already exist as this is the real 3D deal. Technically incredible and with a huge open game world, Gangstar is an utterly superb title that shows just how much untapped potential the iPhone still has.

Plot-wise, it's as generic as they come, but still entertains as you steer a low-level crim named PThug to notoriety. Missions are varied and range from simple deliveries to extravagant hits, while the colourful characters you interact with are just as memorable as those from GTA. Even combat is extremely good thanks to a great lock-on system that makes scraps and gunfights a breeze.

Only a lack of side quests and the tricky accelerometer-assisted driving sections let down what is otherwise a stunning achievement. Much more of this kind of thing please Gameloft. This is the kind of escapist nonesense gaming is all about.

Rating ★★★★½

Price: £1.99/$2.99 **Developer:** Capcom Interactive Inc

Dark Void Zero

The best NES game you've never played



Capcom's official line is that this retro-tinged action platformer is in actual fact a game that was developed years ago for the Nintendo Entertainment System but never saw the light of day. It's a cunning deception, but don't believe it for a second; this is merely a skillfully executed trick to raise awareness of the Dark Void home console release, but the real irony is that this is arguably a better piece of software overall than its bigger brother.

Playing like the best NES title you never got to experience, Dark Void Zero is a welcome dose of old-school action on a system woefully under-represented in the genre. While it may seem relatively short, with only three stages to tackle, the size of the environments is impressive. There are also plenty of innovative ideas on display, too. You can fly around each location using a rocket pack, pick up a wide range of different weaponry, and use secondary ordinance to take out your robotic enemies. The objective of each stage is to collect a trio of control codes which will enable the destruction of the malevolent Portal X, but to obtain these codes you'll need to navigate through tight corridors, locked doors and danger-filled rooms. This task is made easier by the fact that the on-screen controls are excellent, granting precise movement and allowing for some surprisingly agile tricks, but it's the faux-retro visuals and chiptune soundtrack which steal the show; developer Other Ocean even goes as far as to make you blow into your iPhone's microphone in order to 'clean' the cartridge before the game is loaded up – something NES-owners will remember all too well.

The addition of Open Feint support and unlockable achievements keeps Dark Void Zero's appeal high, but with so few levels to tackle it's inevitable that boredom is going to set in sooner or later. Indeed, once you've completed the game, there's little else to do other than tackle it on a harder setting. Still, it's difficult to feel too put out when the quality of the platforming is this high.

Rating ★★★★★



Take to the skies with your trusty rocket pack, but watch out for the enemy's destructive force fields, which can send you tumbling earthwards.



The 8-bit visuals look brilliantly authentic and will bring a nostalgic tear to the eye of any former NES owner.



You'll face some formidable opponents in Portal X, so be sure to keep an eye out for more powerful firearms at all times.

iPhone & iPad | Action

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Jagex

StarCannon

Like having an arcade cabinet in your pocket



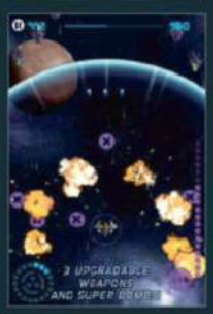
Don't be fooled by StarCannon's lush visuals and pumping soundtrack – underneath the flashy exterior beats the heart of a true retro shoot-'em-up classic. Taking inspiration from the coin-sucking arcade shooters of yesteryear, StarCannon offers little in the way of surprises, but boasts ample amounts of demanding and rewarding gameplay. The ability to slow down time is a nice touch, and allows less-experienced gamers to get to grips with the incredible volume of enemies and bullets on-screen at any one time. However, it's the 'touch to move' controls which impress the most. Considering the iPhone lacks a proper D-pad to work with, the level of accuracy possible with StarCannon's interface is really quite remarkable.

Like a lot of shooters, it's not going to hold your interest forever, but while it lasts, StarCannon is a true thrill-ride that iPhone-owning blasting veterans are not going to want to miss, especially at this price.

Rating ★★★★★







Upgrade weapons to tackle stronger foes.

Price £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Capcom Co Ltd

Resident Evil 4: PLATINUM

Fiddly but the old Resi Evil magic is still there



Resident Evil Degeneration did the impossible and proved Capcom's hit franchise could work on the iPhone, even with a few little niggles. Instead of trying to emulate the original GameCube game, this effort instead takes some of its most exciting moments and uses some wisely placed controls – that only occasionally let you down – to deliver an exhilarating slice of action.

While it can look visually impressive at times, shortcuts have been made so that the game runs as smoothly as possible. Still, the game's many bosses look impressive and the icon-driven interface enables you to run, shoot, stab enemies and pick up objects far easier than you could in Degeneration – although, to be fair, it's still far from perfect. The price is a little steep and its occasionally stiff controls will give the iPhone haters plenty of ammunition, but this is still a resoundingly good effort and a decent version of what still stands as being the best Resident Evil game to date.

Rating ★★★☆☆



Context-sensitive controls make battling the Los Ganados rather easy.





Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: TopLineSoft Systems

Bomber Zone 2 HD

An off-target attempt at an old format



The main idea behind Bomber is pretty sound. Use up and down movement of the iPad to control your plane and avoid airships, whilst blowing the crap out of the enemy on the ground. Sadly the graphics, sounds and gameplay make this a very pedestrian game. Rather than trying to be skilful through the game, we resorted to simply carpet bombing the entire landscape - which was fun for all of two minutes.



The simplistic graphics don't do enough to reel in the player.

Rating ★★★☆☆

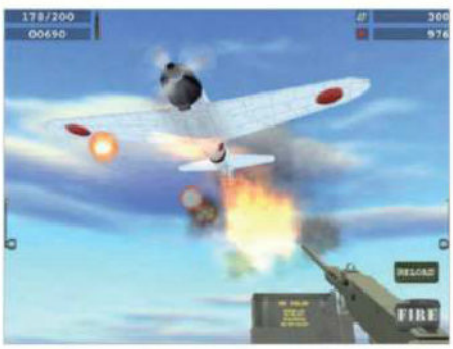
Price: £1.99/$2.99 Developer: CoreSoft Inc

Blood Beach HD

Fight them on the iPad



After impressing on the iPhone, CoreSoft's shooter finds a pleasing new home on the iPad. The larger screen not only allows you to really appreciate the slick visuals, but also makes it much easier to target enemies. The controls – while a little sensitive – work extremely well, and lap play is definitely advised for easy reloading. Admittedly, simply shooting down waves of enemy air and ground troops does get repetitive, but it's exceedingly good fun.



Peppering planes with lead is surprisingly satisfying.

Rating ★★★☆☆

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Goorusoft

MetalWars2

'Three-story monster – activate!'



There are few things cooler than stomping around in a massive robotic tank, so it's easy to see why MetalWars2 might appeal to many gamers. Thankfully, it's not just a cool concept – the game boasts great controls, excellent visuals and compelling gameplay. It also has a neat progression system, thanks to the fact that you can upgrade your mech with new parts and weapons. The lack of a two-player mode is a bit of a shame but the solo campaign is robust enough to keep you hooked.



You can issue orders to wingman to make life easier.

Rating ★★★★☆

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Foursaken Media

N.Y.Zombies

Having a bite in the Big Apple



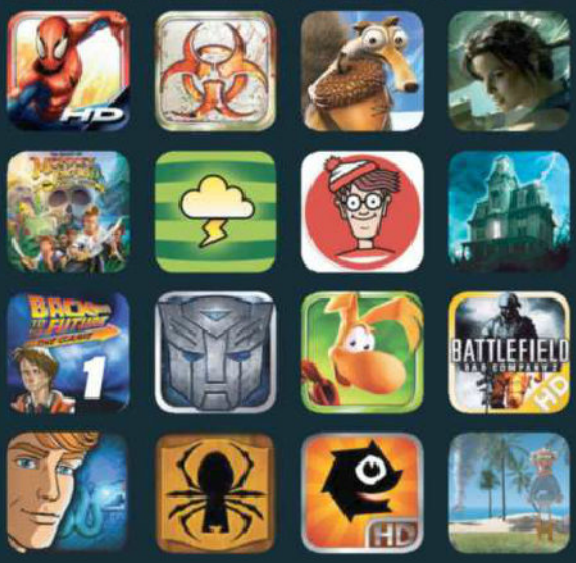
NY Zombies is fairly unique in its approach to wanton slaughter of the undead, somehow managing to combine elements of lightgun shooters like The House Of The Dead, in that you have no control over your movement other than where you're shooting, and the stoking of your survival instinct that made the recent Left 4 Dead so popular. It's somewhat limited, but it's well-suited to being played on a phone with missions never lasting more than a few minutes.



The simplistic graphics don't do enough to reel in the player.

Rating ★★★★☆

Adventure



Taking you on journey's through strange new worlds or simply opening up the ones you know to new possibilities, these games are the purest form of escapism you'll likely find on either the iPhone or the iPad.

Top Paid Apps	Top Free Apps
The Secret Of Monkey Island Special Edition ★★★★★	Marathon 1 ★★★☆☆
Infinity Blade ★★★★	Emblem HD ★★☆☆☆
N.O.V.A 2 ★★★★★	Lil' Pirates ★★☆☆☆

Staff pick of the section

Monkey Island 2 ★★★★★	Where's Wally ★★★★★



Originally an in-app purchase but now offered for free, Woody's Wild Ride is a simple collect-'em-up game, but fun nonetheless.

Price: Free **Developer:** Walt Disney

Toy Story 3

Take your iPhone to infinity… and beyond!

Not so long ago you couldn't move for Toy Story 3 merchandising – toys, books, stationery. Well, the iPhone just had to get in on the act, and Disney has put together an excellent tribute to probably the best movie Pixar has ever created.

The app acts to draw together lots of information on the movie, offering trailers, info and the ability to link up to the official Toy Story website. Then there's Woody's Wild Ride, where you get to saddle-up Bullseye the horse and take to the dusty roads as Woody, collecting stars as you attempt to defeat the evil Dr Porkchop.

As you play and explore you win pin badges of all the characters, which gives the app a great collectable aspect to it. What's more, the app links up with the Mac version of Toy Story 3, allowing you to control the action on the big screen using your phone.

There is much to love here and the Toy Story 3 app positively shines with Disney sparkle. And while the app advertises Toy Story Mania as an additional game, this will actually cost you £2.99 to download, which is slightly misleading.

Rating ★★★★½

Price: £1.99/$2.99 **Developer:** Lucasfilm International Services Inc

The Secret Of Monkey Island Special Edition

LucasArts' point-and-click adventure finds a new home



We're not sure why it's taken so long for LucasArts to realise that it's sitting on a back catalogue gold mine, but we're glad it has finally seen the light. Indeed, with its swanky new high-definition visuals, amazing voice acting and truly excellent audio, this is LucasArts' hilarious adventure but as you've never seen or heard it before.

The iPhone's screen makes walking around and interacting with the residents of Melee Island an absolute breeze thanks to a clean and easy-to-use interface that's almost as fluid as using a mouse.



You can't hear it here but the newly recorded speech is absolutely brilliant.



A simple swipe of your fingers across the screen and you can play the game as LucasArts originally intended.

The visuals are also excellent, giving the 19-year-old game a new lease of life that easily allows it to hold its ground against some of the iPhone's swankier-looking apps.

For many, though, it's the voice acting that will impress the most. Voiced by series' regulars like Dominic Armato and Earl Boen, it greatly enhances what was already an extremely humorous game and proves that occasionally it is possible to teach an old dog new tricks. Add to this a fantastic new score and LucasArts should be commended for the sheer amount of care and attention that it has poured into one of its best-loved titles.

If you're not a fan of the new look and sound then a simple swipe of the screen will revert the visuals and audio back to how it appeared nearly two decades ago. It's a little disappointing that the cracking speech isn't used for the original, but you can't really blame LucasArts for wanting to keep it as authentic as possible.

Even if Monkey Island retained its original look it would still get five stars from us because it remains one of the best examples of the genre that gamers have ever seen. The fact that the extremely clever puzzles, memorable characters and funny plot can now be enjoyed by a new generation of gamers just makes it all the sweeter. Absolutely essential, even with its slightly hefty price tag compared to other games of this type.

Rating ★★★★★



Monkey Island is filled with numerous classic characters and locations. Be sure to speak to everyone to get the most out of it.

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Gameloft S.A.

Rayman 2: The Great Escape

A platforming classic arrives on the iPhone, better than ever

On its original release in 1999, Rayman 2: The Great Escape was hailed as a huge leap forward. Its graphics were unparalleled, and its Gallic sense of humour was a breath of fresh air in an increasingly dull 3D platforming space. And now we have a brilliant and accurate port of it on our phones. If we didn't have so many other games to play, we'd take a moment to reflect on that.



The one area where this iPhone version of Rayman 2 suffers is, as is so often the case with console ports on Apple's handhelds, is in its controls. The lack of an analogue stick and physical buttons is always going to be a problem for these games, we fear, but Rayman 2 does a fair job of coping without. The virtual stick works acceptably, and while you might lose the on-screen buttons in the heat of the moment, they're well sized and spaced out enough to minimise the hassle. There seems to be enough leeway built in to ensure that even the precision platforming sequences aren't too frustrating without the feedback of a physical joystick and buttons. Not ideal, then, but the best we can hope for on the iPhone.

That aside, though, the game has held up well. It's a bold and beautiful-looking game that runs remarkably well on all iPhone OS hardware – those without a 3GS or later-model iPod touch aren't left in the cold here – and, in gameplay terms, it's as good as it's ever been. Ubisoft was rightly praised on its original release for the variety on display alongside its visual brilliance, and it's easy to see why: aside from the standard 3D platforming you've got races, flying sections, underwater sequences, water-skiing, surfing… you won't want for something to do in this game, that's for sure.

Rayman 2 is a game that's difficult not to like. From its irreverent humour to its striking visuals, it's the kind of game that we don't seem to get all that much any more, and iPhone owners can now enjoy it in as good a form as it's ever been.

Rating ★★★★½



The character designs are incredible, and the game has bags of personality.



Rayman's helicopter hair is about as complicated as his abilities get.



Rayman 2 mixes up its gameplay, dipping its toes in different genres.

Price: £1.49/$1.99 **Developer:** Joe Kauffman

The Secret Of Grisly Manor

Less a point-and-click title, more just a point one…



Collected items can be stored in a charmingly retro satchel, to be uncovered once they're needed.



Trends of all natures are generally cyclical – be it dresses, suits, silly hair or, indeed, videogames. For this reason, the return to simple-by-necessity interfaces offered by Apple's devices may well see the point-and-click undergo a renaissance. Not here mind you; The Secret Of Grisly Manor's challenge proving relatively simplistic, and not altogether bound up in logic.

Help functions prove oddly absent – not exactly the most promising of starts – as players are set loose around the titular house. With no additional character besides our gamer's unseen eye, the only option is to wander about, encountering chess pieces mysteriously missing, butterfly-shaped holes into which, say, jewel encrusted butterflies can be slid, among other such stereotypes. Solutions to puzzles are therefore quite often simply solved by conducting thorough searches, rather than engaging the brain.

While some may view this as old-school charm, old-fashioned might be a more appropriate turn of phrase.

Rating ★★★☆☆

Price: £1.79/$2.99 **Developer:** FrogDogMedia LLC

Transformers: Dark of the Moon

Time to take on those Decepticons for the umpteenth time



Those Transformers are at it again, saving the world from the pesky Decepticons so we can all live safer lives until the next movie is released. And this game doesn't disappoint. It's solid fun with some neat gameplay mechanics, and is overall a well put-together experience from EA.

The game follows the movie closely as you pilot Optimus Prime through 13 varied levels. There's some great RPG elements as well, letting you upgrade a cavalcade of weaponry and Optimus himself.

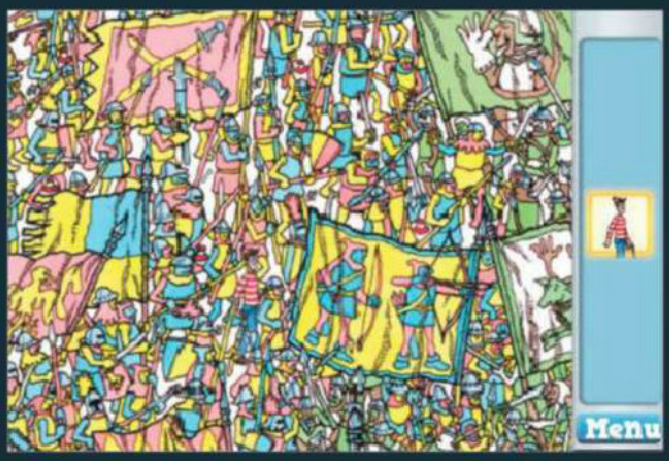
Undoubtedly there are flaws. For one, the vehicle sections where you switch into truck-mode are clunky and hard to control. While they're a nice break from the action, we often found ourselves unintentionally veering off the path we were meant to be travelling. While there's enough variety and some interesting boss fights, it runs close to getting tedious on occasion.



The handling in car-mode is pretty poor, which ruins the appeal of transforming.

Rating ★★★☆☆

iPhone & iPad | Adventure



Good luck with that. Finding something human-sized in that madness is difficult enough.



Wally's companions from the later books also make appearances.

Price: £0.09/$0.99 **Developer:** Ludia

Where's Wally? The Fantastic Journey

He's on the iPhone, obviously…

A Where's Wally? game is an idea that's easy to baulk at, but the more you play it the more it makes sense. The iPhone's screen has more than enough definition to show all the tiny details, and the interface is certainly capable of scrolling around large images, as anyone who's used the built-in Maps and Photos apps will tell you. Throw in a bit of animation to differentiate it from the books and muddy things up as you search, and you have a perfect combination.

Any complaints are more a fault of the subject matter as they are the game, because as an adaptation it's pretty much flawless. We can imagine that extended play sessions might play havoc with your eyes, and once you've been through it once there's little reason to go back beyond beating it with faster times, but while it lasts The Fantastic Journey is a superb adventure for all ages.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £1.99/$2.99 **Developer:** Chillingo Ltd

Storm In A Teacup

Take a spin in my… teacup?

You couldn't get a cuter concept than Storm In A Teacup. A young boy takes a ride on a magic floating teacup as he hops between platforms tied by strings, passes houses made to look like pop-up books, and defeats disgruntled raincloud with a candy-firing cannon. We even feel a bit sick just writing that.

But its charm is enough to give it a unique feel, with the bright visuals and pleasant tunes making it a treat to play. Unfortunately, the gameplay takes punishment alongside it, with very basic platforming pinning the rest of the game together. A handful of difficult – if not impossible – collectables mean that those willing to put the effort in with find a bit more of a challenge, though more likely its frustration will just cancel out any will to play.

Despite this, however, the pleasantness of it all may well appeal to children, especially since the basic gameplay doesn't really require much in the way of skill.

It's not perfect, and there are certainly better alternatives already available in the App Store. But for a saccharine sweet platform game Storm In A Teacup is as good as any.

Rating ★★★★½



For the most part it's a physics-based platformer, meaning switches and blocks will need to be moved to activate.

Price: £4.99/$6.99 **Developer:** Telltale Games

Back To The Future Episode 1 HD

Great Scott, or, er, just plain regular?



From Wallace & Gromit and Monkey Island to the upcoming Jurassic Park episodic series, Telltale has gained somewhat of a reputation for breathing fresh life into a beloved yet inactive series. Though occasionally workmanlike in nature, its releases have nevertheless consistently captured the essence of each subject licence, throwing in references aplenty to keep seasoned veterans entertained for every minute.

And so, that formula is resurrected through this first of five nostalgia fests featuring Doc Brown and Marty McFly, which opens as trusty hound Einstein becomes a time travel pioneer on a dusky parking lot all the way back in 1985 where the first movie memorably kicked things off.



Consultation with Bob Gale has allowed this update's narrative to dovetail, making it appear that Hill Valley only ever contained three families.

Troubles begin to arise, however, when rather than going on to play the role of loveable eccentric through our hero's existential crisis, Christopher Lloyd's character instead disappears into thin air as the iconic DeLorean fails to dematerialise, offering his friend and confidante an apology before disappearing into thin air. Secreted to times unknown, what better genre could there be to initiate the hunt than a point and click adventure? Or, as the iOS universe knows it, point-and-tap. Using the license as a convenient device to shift proceedings to prohibition-era America, rather than an opportunity to engage with time manipulation puzzles, events prove rather rigid.

Addressing Telltale's puzzle architecture from a position of cold objectivity, it's difficult not to be disappointed. From multiple identical puzzle solutions peppered throughout, to teasers solved via the exhaustion of all dialogue or action-based options, the thought that players are simply tapping between a sequence of elongated narrative elements proves hard to avoid. Ultimately, it seems likely that seasoned point and click adventurers will bemoan the eagerness with which puzzles have been simplified, while others will wonder how such logical processes tie in with a movie that has a hovering skateboard in it.

As ever, a solid app is ensured by adequately designed gameplay and high production values. However, those hoping execution might match expectations should prepare to be slightly disappointed as this app doesn't quite manage to recapture the glory and majesty of the series of films it's inspired by.

Rating ★★★½☆





The amount of disorientation crammed into such long, thin three dimensional spaces proves quite an achievement. Oh, virtual analogue sticks…

iPhone & iPad | Adventure

Price: £1.99/$2.99 **Developer:** Tiger Style Games

Spider: The Secret Of Bryce Manor

And you thought spiders were scary…

Sometimes a game comes along that's so imaginative, so beautifully designed and so much fun to play that you'll play it until your iPhone runs out of juice: Spider is one such game.

Taking control of one of nature's most misunderstood creepy crawlies, you're initially required to do nothing more than reach the many portals that are hidden around the beautiful, but mysterious Bryce Manor. This is achieved with simple swipes and touches of the screen that allow your eight-legged friend to either scurry around objects, or make huge daring leaps in his hunt for food.



The more webs you spin the bigger multipliers you can score.

Touch the spider first and his jump will be accompanied by a thin line of silk that trails out behind him. Join these together and you'll be able to form webs which will capture the many insects found in each room of the huge mansion. The insects you hunt down are pretty mindless and fly directly into your webs, but as the game progresses you'll need to use different tactics in order to take down wasps and mosquitoes.

Your silk only lasts for so long, so you'll need to continually trap insects or you'll run the risk of turning into a dried out husk as your poor spider eventually starves.

With plenty of secrets to discover, a whole host of truly beautiful and well-designed rooms to explore and a clever scoring system – continually making webs without touching the ground nets large multipliers – Spider constantly impresses.

Although it won't take forever to discover the secret of Bryce Manor, Spider's longevity is assured thanks to some excellent additional modes that are unlocked once the game is completed. Feeding Frenzy gives you three minutes to get a high score, Hunger mode has you desperately trying to net and eat insects before you starve, while Precision mode gives you a set amount of thread uses and shortens its length, meaning you have to find new ways to negotiate the often huge (for a spider at least) levels.

Wonderfully inventive, Spider is an excellent iPhone release that sports clever controls, excellent visuals and clever gameplay.

Rating ★★★★★



Pinch the screen to get a bird's-eye view of each of *Spider*'s beautiful levels.



You can't spin webs when you're hungry, so eat as many insects as possible.

Stranded Without A Phone HD

Maths – saving castaways since time began

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Gilligames







Collect objects and you'll be ready to start hunting, via a bow and arrow, or more cunning trap.



Perhaps the greatest success any videogame can lay claim to is in feeding addicts' most basic desires – in this case, collection – without the player being any wiser as to what's taking place. SWAP HD sees you taking control of a hopelessly adrift traveller, charged with escaping a desert island using only his wits, and the ability to hammer, tie and shoot the many objects that lie about. Every step taken depletes his energy reserves, be they nutritional or liquid in nature, players perishing if they fail to feed said needs by utilising a fair degree of mental dexterity.

Offering gamers no help whatsoever until they stumble upon their first object, from here it's a matter of trial and error as our nutty professor seeks to populate lists of randomly collected items that might go on to form something useful. An original concept, considered in nature, and well executed for a game we can highly recommend to anyone regardless of gaming skill.

Rating ★★★★★

Spoing HD

Price: £0.59/$0.99 **Developer:** Chillingo Ltd

Bounce your way around platform-filled levels in this unique game

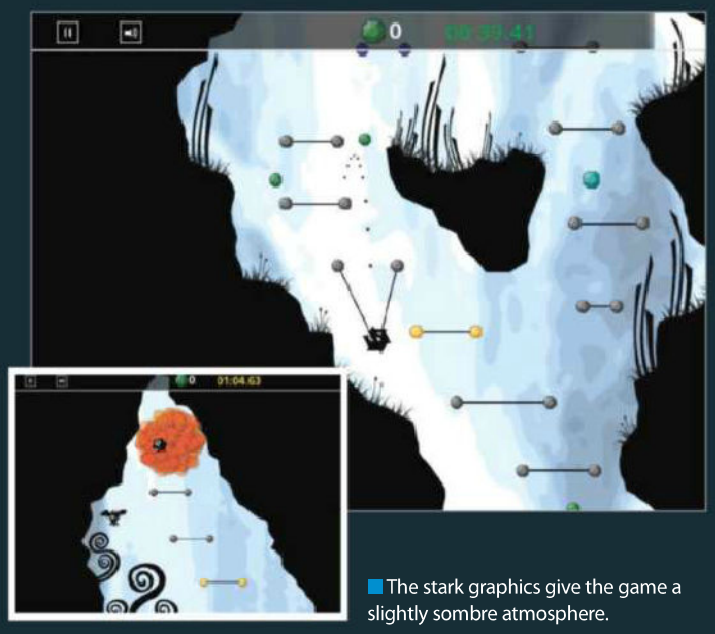


Poor Spoing, the titular character at the centre of this game. No sooner did he agree to guard his friends' collection of gems, they're all whisked away while he sleeps. For the rest of the game, you're tasked with helping him track down the missing gems one at a time.

The basic gameplay element of Spoing sees you jumping from one elastic platform to the next by pulling Spoing down and letting go. A faint, dotted line gives you hints as to where Spoing will travel. The levels often break into separate paths, or introduce enemies that need to be avoided. You can also create your own green-coloured platforms later in the game.

Once Spoing manages to grab the gem at the end of each level, the game gives a performance rating that's calculated by the time taken to complete the stage. The congratulatory sound effect that Spoing emits at the end of each stage is rather irritating. Nevertheless, this is a fun game that's perfectly suited for iDevices.

Rating ★★★★★



The stark graphics give the game a slightly sombre atmosphere.

Price: £1.99/$2.99 **Developer:** Electronic Arts

Battlefield:Bad Company 2

Take the good fight online on iPad

The Battlefield series has become a huge success for Electronic Arts and developer Digital Illusions, with the Bad Company spin-off series in particular faring well. Famed for its sensational graphics engine, slick single-player campaign and excellent online multiplayer mode, it's gratifying that this new iPad release does everything it can to capture the authenticity of the console originals.

While it can't compete with the graphical magnificence of the home ports, this nevertheless looks good, although it lacks the shine of more recent offerings. The draw distance is very good (which comes in handy during online play), and the animation is spot-on, while the environments are nicely detailed and full of character.

Predictably, Battlefield: Bad Company 2 does fall down in one key area – the control interface. No matter how many first-person shooters we play on the iPad, they're invariably let down by cumbersome controls, and Battlefield is no different. Neatly dividing the screen into two invisible areas, the left-hand side controls your movement, while the right lets you view the game world. Shots are fired by tapping the right side of the screen, while grenades, crouching/entering cover, reloading and switching weapons are handled by tapping or swiping the relevant onscreen icons. It's still no match for a keyboard or gamepad.

It's a relatively straightforward system, and for the most part works well, but as more enemies appear, it becomes tougher to move and aim without fumbling the controls, or inadvertently throwing a grenade.

Fortunately, the AI is fairly pedestrian on all but the hardest difficulty setting, and the ability to change both your turning speed and the position of various icons does make things easier, which is handy, as Battlefield throws plenty of enemies at you.

The levels themselves are quite linear, often requiring you to follow simple objectives, ranging from blowing up vehicles to clearing sections of enemies, but the fast-paced gameplay doesn't make this a problem. Far more worrying is the AI of your companions. They're completely blasé for the most part, and in many sections will simply stroll forward as the battle rages around them. Luckily, there's enough cool set pieces and variety to keep you entertained through the surprisingly lengthy solo campaign.

Another nice touch is the multiplayer mode, which supports up to ten players. Playable via Bluetooth and online, it's an enjoyable experience that's only let down by the inability to use vehicles.

It might lack the bombast and bravado of the home consoles, but Battlefield still manages to be great fun on the iPad.

Rating ★★★★★



The graphics aren't quite as impressive, but this is essentially the same game as its console counterpart.



The explosions here aren't quite as impressive as their console counterparts manage to be, but they still pack a punch.

Price: £4.99/$6.99 **Developer:** Revolution Software Ltd

Broken Sword – The Smoking Mirror: Remastered

And you thought spiders were scary…



While Broken Sword: The Smoking Mirror has never been as good a game as the original, what Revolution Software has shown is that it's now the developer to beat when it comes to porting classic point-and-click adventures to iOS. It's an understandably popular option for studios with such renowned games in their back catalogues, and while the quality of many of the games is undeniable, the standard of the Apple adaptations has fluctuated.

Here though, the port has clearly been given a great deal of care. This isn't a director's cut like the first game, so you won't find any new puzzles or added scenarios, but it borrows that version's excellent transposition of mouse controls onto the touch screen, making moving, interacting, and managing your inventory a snap. Also brought over are character portraits from comic-book artist Dave Gibbons (Watchmen), who contributes a new digital comic prologue as well, and a general cleaning up of the game's graphics, which largely remain detailed and beautiful. This version brings plenty more to the table, though. It's now a universal app, so those with more than one of either an iPad, iPhone or iPod touch will no longer be forced to choose or buy it twice, and it actively encourages cross-platform play, with innovative Dropbox syncing for saving (see boxout). In the absence of any official way to back up saved games and move them between devices, this feature could prove to be incredibly useful.

As a game, however, The Smoking Mirror simply isn't as good as the original. While it has its own share of memorable moments, there aren't as many great characters to meet along the way, and it's a little too easy for experienced adventurers, who will breeze through without much difficulty. That said, it's still an enjoyable ride, made all the more pleasurable by some gorgeous artwork and characters who are still as entertaining as they've ever been. Even with our reservations, The Smoking Mirror comes recommended. This is a superb adventure that's been given one of the most polished iOS ports we've seen yet.

Rating ★★★★★



There are some genuinely funny lines, and the standard of the voice acting on display here is excellent.



Broken Sword: The Smoking Mirror comes with full Game Center integration for Achievements. Animal lovers might want to look away here.

Painkiller Purgatory

Price: £1.49/$1.99 **Developer:** Chillingo Ltd

Quite appropriately named







The porting process hasn't gone especially well, as reflected in the cumbersome controls.



Squeezing this first-person shooter into its limited parameters seems absurd, relative to other reboot candidates that are out there.

Created almost as the antidote to an increasingly tactical and po-faced genre upon its 2004 release, Painkiller focused on two elements alone: death, and the swift application thereof. Put bluntly, the control methods open to porters MachineWorks cannot begin to cope with either the original title's pace or central gameplay mechanic. Encouraging players to stylishly rush upcoming foes, triple bladed buzzsaw in hand, the experience should blend skilful strafing with more tactical disposal of far-off foes. In short, a swift and enjoyable transition between close and medium-range combat. A control system that forces gamers to disengage and involuntarily spin around obviously cannot achieve this goal.

This system's incredibly woolly nature forces its developer by necessity to bend bullets, lending players a helping hand the game couldn't function without.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Lucasfilm International Services Ltd

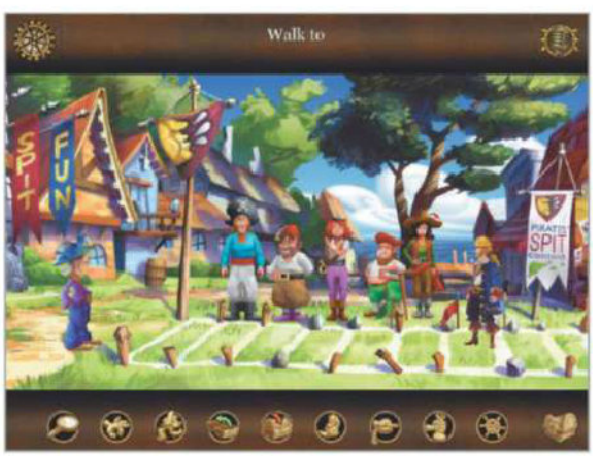
Monkey Island 2 Special Edition: LeChuck's Revenge for iPad

More Pirate fun with Guybrush



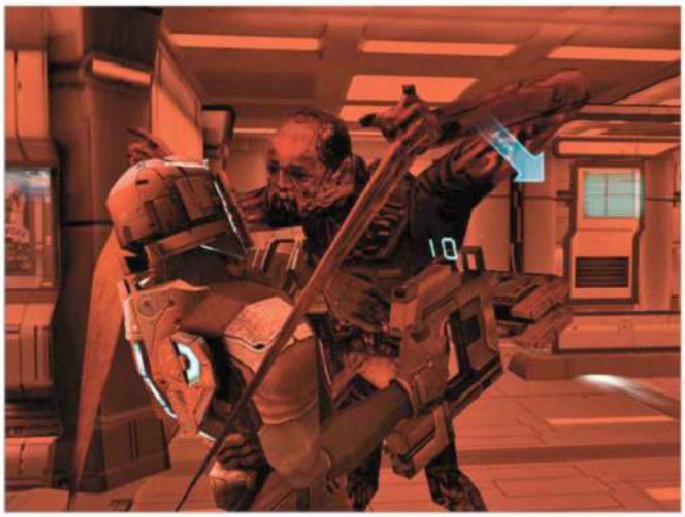
Point-and-click adventures seem tailor-made for the iPad, and in Monkey Island 2 you have one of the best ever made. This re-release brings a number of excellent enhancements. The most obvious is visual, with the vintage pixelated graphics – still available at any time with a simple two-finger swipe – replaced with new, high-resolution alternatives that look superb and come with a whole new set of references and in-jokes to spot. Also new is full voice acting, available regardless of your graphical preference, which is of a very high standard and brings a lot to the game.

And the list of new features goes on and on. There's a highly entertaining developer commentary, numerous control tweaks to make it play at its best on the iPad, new music, a hint system… We'd recommend this if it was a quick and dirty port, but when it's been updated with this much love and care it becomes an absolutely essential app download.



Monkey Island humour never fails to deliver.

Rating ★★★★★



Necromorphs have an annoying habit of jumping up and surprising you. Shake them off with a deft swipe.



There's a large amount of upgrades, so be sure to pick up the credits you find.

Price: £5.99/$7.99 **Developer:** Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

Dead Space HD

In space no one can hear you scream with frustration



You have to hand it to Electronic Arts. Rather than adapt the excellent and vastly underrated Dead Space: Extraction to Apple's iPad, they've instead created a brand new title that fans of the franchise are bound to lap up.

Set three years after the events of the original game, and nicely setting up the story for the console release, Dead Space 2, The iPad version proves to be every bit as atmospheric as its forebears. This in part is due to some truly phenomenal lighting effects, and sound design that has allows the game to truly immerse you into the onscreen action. It's undoubtedly an impressive achievement, further helped by some well-staged set pieces, which, while not quite on par with those of Dead Space 2, nevertheless showcase the game's strengths brilliantly.

Unfortunately, while Dead Space is an impressive technical achievement, its controls aren't up to the same high standards. Movement is relatively straightforward, but things become a little more difficult upon drawing your weapon. Tapping the right hand side of the screen draws your gun (further taps fire it), tapping a number near the gun switches through its different modes (the alternative is a cumbersome tilt method), and tapping on your protagonist's back activates stasis mode, which is handy for slowing down approaching necromorphs. It sounds relatively straightforward on paper, but is a lot trickier in practice, particularly on the iPad, and once you start adding in movements like swiping downwards to stomp enemies, or double-tapping your character's back to spin him through 180 degrees, it starts to become even more cumbersome than you would have thought.



You do of course get used to it, but there'll always be moments, particularly when you're under attack from numerous necromorphs, that you just can't respond quickly enough to what's happening onscreen. This makes for some very frustrating deaths, and ruins the game's fantastic atmosphere.

Dead Space is still an enjoyable game that fans of the genre will certainly like. It's just far too ambitious for its own good.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Capcom Co Ltd

Devil May Cry 4 Refrain

'Refrain' being the operative word…



The point of Devil May Cry 4 Refrain was to port a DMC experience onto the iPhone.Congratulations Capcom, in that you have succeeded. Just don't expect us to be nearly as enamoured with this eviscerated portable action-adventure as we were with the original.

It opens in the same fashion as Devil May Cry 4, with Dante teasing his sibling Nero before displaying his affections by engaging Nero in battle; single combat being an effective method as any of learning the control system. At least it would be, if it we didn't have to wrestle with the virtual d-pad to begin with. The margin for error is slim, so even slim little pinkies like ours can miss by a fraction of a centimetre and hit one or several of the other directional buttons, resulting in Nero pirouetting on-screen.

Moving from one screen to the next is fine but combat relies on prescribed combinations that at best, there was a 50-50 chance of successful execution.

Perhaps it's just as well that we were fighting with the virtual control stick and buttons, because Devil May Cry 4 Refrain offers very little challenge otherwise. Nero's devil hand, pistol and sword pummels, punctures and pierces the sluggish and ineffectual denizens of this nightmare world, dispatching them like he was wielding the slashing steel equivalent of an atomic bomb. Even the poorly scripted bosses, the first of which has a notable habit of clipping into walls and sticking there as if the deadly midget chopping away at its flanks couldn't be less interesting, drop like skittles when faced with Nero.

Patience is the only thing that will end up being truly tested by Devil May Cry 4 Refrain. After several hours randomly mashing virtual buttons, trawling through zones of recycled textures and respawning baddies, not to mention a vomit-inducing, melodramatic plot, as well as countless minutes spent squinting at unskippable text, there is every chance you will end up being as exasperated about a game as the iPhone has the capacity to make you. At the time of writing, updates have stopped it from working on iPad too, which is possibly the only portable device with a screen big enough to fix our virtual d-pad issues.

All in all, this is a disappointing adaptation of the original title. Dedicated fans may persevere, but for others it could be a chore.

Rating ★★☆☆☆



I shot you! No, I shot you first! No you didn't! Yes I did! No you didn't…etc, etc and so forth…



The enemies aren't particularly challenging to defeat, and can be swept aside with moves such as this.



Price: £3.99/$5.99 **Developer:** Chair Entertainment Group

Infinity Blade

So much more than just a pretty face

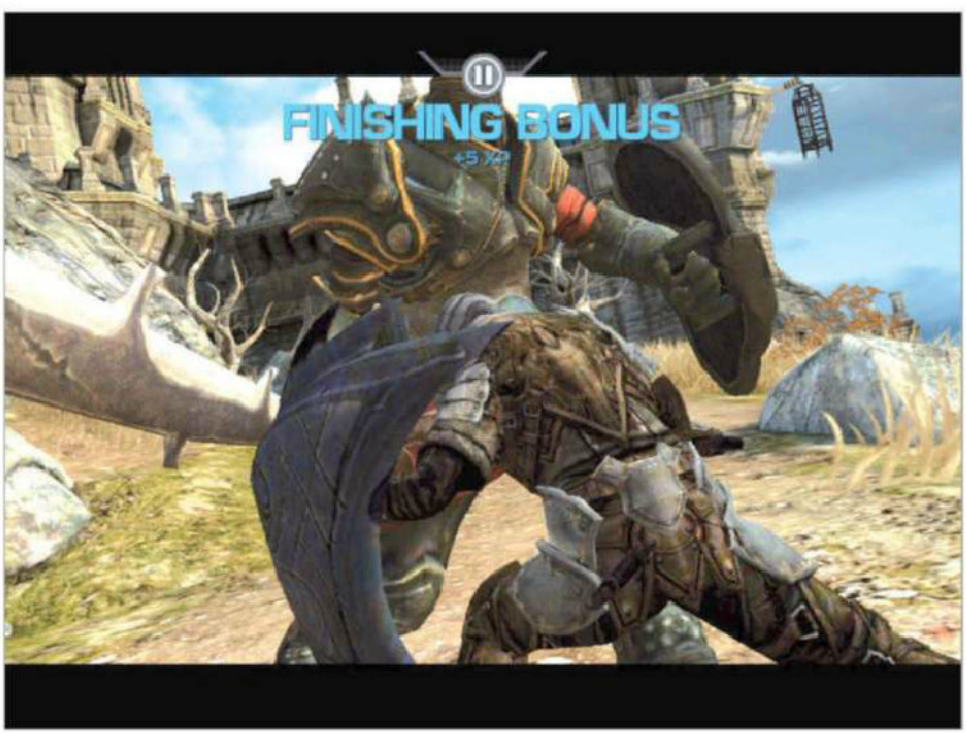
As the iPhone and iPad increases in popularity, more and more big name developers are starting to take notice, eager to earn a slice of the profitable Apple pie and perhaps earn some kudos in the process.

Infinity Blade by Chair Entertainment – under the watchful eye of parent company Epic Games – is the latest developer to jump onboard, and the end result is arguably one of the best looking iPad games of all time. Utilising the Unreal Engine and based on the Epic Citadel that had been released a few months previously, Infinity Blade is quite simply astonishing to look at. The sensational looking visuals are steeped in staggering detail, while the animation of the main protagonist and the many Titans he has to defeat is so luscious you'd think you were playing the equivalent of a PS3 or 360 title, so astounding is its look.

Visuals are only half the story however, as Chair as created a title which is just perfect for playing on the go. Taking control of a Knight, your goal is to defeat the God King, an impossible task that will see you instantly die on your first attempt, only to take on the role of your child, eager to avenge the family bloodline. Infinity Blade is all about repetition. You face the same enemy, walk through the same parts of the castle and will eventually die by the God King's hand until you finally develop the skills to defeat him. And yet for all is repetition and grinding gameplay – swords, armour, shields, helmets and magical rings are constantly levelled up – it's never boring to play.

This in part is due to the magnificent control system that has you parrying sword swipes and dodging and blocking blows with simple swipes and taps of your finger. It's a delightfully elegant control system that still requires a large amount of skill due to the different style enemies that you face. While the adventure is on rails, you can scan the area at the beginning of each battle for hidden items, and it's also possible to choose limited multiple routes. Its linearity will might prove off-putting to some, but this remains a magnificent example of what the iPhone is capable of.

Rating ★★★★★



When a foe's defeated you'll have a short amount of time to lay as many hits on him as possible to boost your XP.



Stats can constantly be progressed and will give you a much better chance of beating the Death God.

Red Ball 3 HD

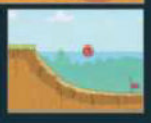
Price: £1.49/$1.99 **Developer:** Chillingo Ltd

We get the jump on the iPad's latest hot platform game



The ball itself can only move and jump, but the game regularly adds new contraptions that radically expand what you can, and must, do.







With its generic name and basic-looking visuals, Red Ball 3 is a game that seems cheap and unpolished on first impressions, but is actually a great little platform game with some clever touches. The objective is similar to just about any iOS platformer out there: reach the end of the stage, and if you want an extra challenge, collect the three stars trickily placed around the level. The controls are simple – just left, right and jump buttons – but it's the way that little red ball moves that adds challenge. Learning how to make use of and/or compensate for his momentum is the key to getting around, as is the ability to switch directions mid-air.

Unlike so many other games, Red Ball 3 manages to become more fun the more complicated it gets. There's a wonderful level early on, for example, where you have to push a boulder down a ramp and then jump over it and get across the gap first to activate a bridge. It's things like this that make Red Ball 3 a fun game to play.

Rating ★★★★★

Samurai II: Vengeance

Price: £1.99/$2.99 **Developer:** MADFINGER Games

So enjoyable your sides might just split…



With their touch-screen interface and small display size (iPad aside), iDevices aren't known for their addiction to ambitious action titles. Regardless, that's just what's on offer here. Set in a vibrant Japanese feudal environment, players will assume the role of your generic samurai character, destined to right a few wrongs using the pointy side of his blade.

Combat is kept relatively simple down to necessity more than any other factor. Three attack buttons only are afforded to the player – two covering quick and more considered strokes of the blade, one used to evade.

Before you break out the Pop Tarts, though, be aware that Samurai II: Vengeance suffers from some perennial touch-screen problems. Too much of the screen can be obscured by the process of simply moving around each stage, while puzzles (such as they are) must employ only one generic action button and are hence neutered. Such cel-shaded graphics, though, do play entirely to the device's strengths, giving many a reason to play on.



Reducing enemies to a bloody pulp earns Karma, which can be exchanged for more damaging combos.

Rating ★★★★★



Comic book styling is used to good effect in this game and adds massively to the sense of fun throughout. Check out Spidey's rubber arms in this awesome black suit attack…

Price: £4.99/$6.99 **Developer:** Gameloft S.A.

Spider-Man: Total Mayhem HD

Comic book fun comes alive in this action-packed adventure

Each big boss poses a real threat and attacks you in a new way that you need to decipher quickly.

We're pretty sure that there isn't a decent computer format out there that hasn't had a Spider-Man game or two made for it. So, we can understand why consumers can treat the release of yet another game featuring the world's most famous web-slinger with a little indifference. Those of you that fall into this category need to seriously rekindle your faith in that little radioactive spider that bit Peter Parker and created one of the best comic book heroes of all time. Gameloft has decided to opt for a more comic-like feel with this game, and at first we thought the graphics were a little too cute, and that they might have been better off concentrating their efforts elsewhere.

Turns out our concerns were misplaced, as the game engine is very cool. Obviously, the iPad is limited in a number of ways when it comes to gaming, so it's up to the developer to compensate and make things easier on the user. Gameloft have done this with an easy to use joystick and a fighting system that makes kicking the utter crap out of people a lot of fun, with the number of possible hit combinations being what really makes the difference. By combining button presses, you can cause all kinds of bodily damage in all kinds of ways. If you add this to the pretty decent web-swinging and varied level setup, then you've got yourself a great game. Coupled with the possibility of learning even better moves as you progress, and you've got a game you'll not want to put down.



Use Spidey's webs to swing from lampposts and use them in your attacks.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Square Enix Ltd

Lara Croft and the Guardian Of Light

Lara goes portable for her latest adventure



After finding success on Steam, PSN and Xbox Live, it was somewhat inevitable that Lara's latest adventure would appear on Apple's machines.

Dispensing with the traditional adventures that were so popular on the PlayStation, Guardian Of Light instead takes a more arcade-style approach in the form of an impressive twin-stick shooter. There are still tombs to plunder and puzzles to solve, but the emphasis is placed firmly on action and destroying as many enemies as possible.

It's a concept that works surprisingly well thanks to the solid controls, well-placed button layouts and some cleverly designed stages. Another huge bonus is the excellent multiplayer mode that can be played via Wi-Fi or Game Room. This adds massively to the core game, and having to approach puzzles with a second player in tow effectively gives you two games for the price of one.

Graphically it's highly impressive, with glorious looking locations, excellent lighting and well-animated characters, but it's the satisfying gameplay and the multi-tasking required to complete each level – ranging from collecting skulls to scoring specific amounts of points – which will keep you coming back for more.

Rating ★★★★★





While the focus is on action, a story is relayed to you at key points in the game, revealing how Lara must team up with the Guardian of Light to defeat the evil Xolotl.





One of the most satisfying aspects of Guardian Of Light is its immensely enjoyable multiplayer mode.

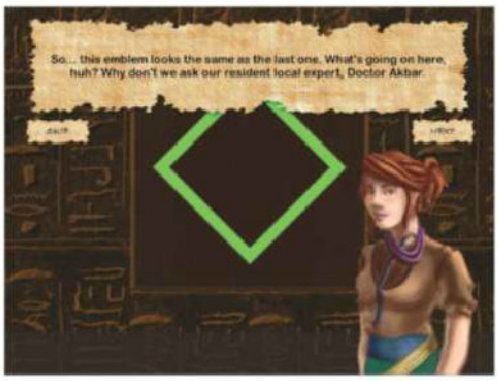
Price: Free Developer: EpicTilt

Emblem HD

A sliding tile puzzle game with a twist. And a turn



At it's heart, Emblem is a deceptively simple puzzle game dressed up with short animated transitions and some absolutely awful and completely unnecessary dialogue. As you progress through the levels you learn new skills and the puzzles get steadily more difficult. As a brain-teaser, there are challenges to be found, it's just a shame you have to sit through all the padding and waffle to get to them. Give the free version a try before paying to upgrade.



Slide and turn the tiles to align the mystical energy channels.

Rating ★★☆☆☆

Price: £1.99/$2.99 Developer: Elecorn LLC

Caster HD

A few niggling flaws, but will entertain you for a spell



Caster is a third-person shooter where you you run around landscapes hurling spells. You're introduced to the gameplay through a quick tutorial before diving straight into the action on your first mission. There's a retro feel to the gameplay, and the graphics look suitably dated. Its just a shame the controls haven't been thought through for iPad, with the jump button awkwardly out of reach in the middle of the screen.



When the best you can do is to write 'Jump' at the bottom of the screen, your controls need some work.

Rating ★★★☆☆

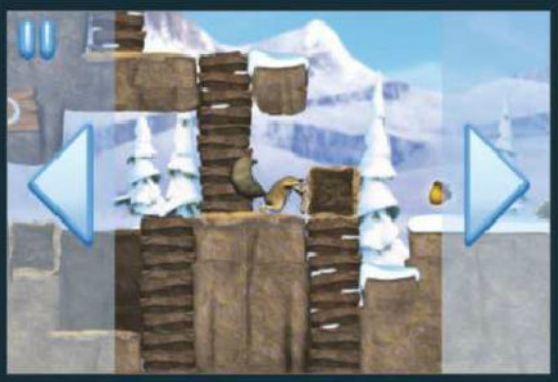
Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Chillingo Ltd

Ice Age: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs

Platforming for all ages



While this puzzle-platform adventure looks like a kids' game, it's good enough for anyone to enjoy. Its style is somewhat reminiscent of the old Oddworld game, with puzzle-solving, enemy evasion, and a deliberate pace taking precedence over twitch reactions. As a result, while it might prove too taxing for the youngest of children, anyone looking for some platforming that works the grey matter a will likely enjoy this a lot.



Dislodging stalactites creates platforms and eliminates enemies.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £2.99/$4.99 Developer: Gameloft S.A.

Zombie Infection

A zombie game worth dying for



Gameloft has a reputation for translating full-blown console games to the iPhone, and although it lacks the licence, Zombie Infection is as close as you're going to get to Resident Evil 5 in your hands. The opening stage, in a favela where the natives are less than friendly, could easily be mistaken for the Capcom game's first stage. Lack of originality aside, though, Gameloft has managed to create an excellent adventure, with great production values, impressive visuals, and workable touch-screen controls that make this a breeze to play.



From the opening cut-scene, complete with full, albeit cheesy, voice acting as your helicopter flies over the city, it's clear that this is no cheap knock-off, and Zombie Infection is worth a look.

Get caught and you'll have to hammer the escape button.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: Free
Developer: Capcom Interactive Inc

Lil' Pirates



On the face of it, Lil' Pirates is simply a cute strategy title based upon the exploits of some vertically challenged criminals upon the virtual high seas. In reality though, it's another example of a common phenomenon in Apple OS gaming – the gold mining simulation. Gold in this case being your wallet. After a woefully short amount of time, this app will hold its hand out, tramp style, hoping micro-transactions will prove more palatable than waiting minutes and hours for tasks to reap rewards. Except the core concept's based more upon vanity than gameplay.
It's a shame because it detracts from would otherwise be a really enjoyable game, but it drags its feet and as such begins to lose your attention. Promising, but lacking.

Rating ★★☆☆☆



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Virtual Programming Ltd

Home Sheep Home



If you're a fan of Shaun The Sheep, you're bound to enjoy this woolly puzzler. The game is based around the show, and features him alongside Timmy and Shirley, working together to reach the safety of the barn.

The controls can sometimes cause a bit of a problem, but for the most part they're fine, and if you've got kids, the watercolour style and cute noises are sure to make this a big hit. It's enough of a challenge to be worth the money, but it could do with more than 15 levels that are currently on offer. That said for its style and solid gameplay we would still recommend this app as ideal for any family as it's easy enough for anyone to pick up and keeps on delivering nuggets of gameplay that you'll find hard not to enjoy a great deal.

Rating ★★★★☆



Price: £2.99/$4.99
Developer: Eyedip

Flight Doodle



Chasing high scores is a popular pursuit in iPhone gaming as it was back in the days of arcades, as is the scribbled graphical style, so it's not surprising to see someone combining the two. In Flight Doodle your airship rises continuously into the heavens, while everything from thunderstorms to missiles rain down in an attempt to cut your trip short. All you need to do is dodge these obsticles and keeping climbing higher.
You can mix it up by changing the themes – turn missiles into push pins and your balloon into a Halloween pumpkin or something of your own design, for example – and collect pick-ups for special abilities, but that's really all there is to it. What's here is hugely enjoyable, but it's not a lot for the price you're asked to pay.

Rating ★★★★☆



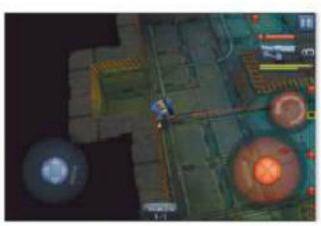
Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Digital Goldfish Ltd

Hot Air Bloon



Any seasoned gamers will be familiar with Hot Air Bloon's modus operandi almost immediately. Evoking memories of 8-bit titles-a-plenty, it requires players to touch-guide a blimp-flying monkey to each level's end, pressing down on the screen to rise, and releasing it to fall as the level flies by automatically. While this ensures little can mechanically go wrong, it also guarantees the end result to be somewhat boring and, virtually-unavoidable. Route-destroying hazards such as gliding birds can hardly help matters. Overall, a short-lived, if solid, distraction that has plenty of similar competitors out there that frankly do this kind of thing much better. You're probably better off hunting down one of those and giving this one a miss.

Rating ★★☆☆☆



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Chillingo Ltd

D.A.R.K.



If you're old enough to remember shooting games like Alien Breed or The Chaos Engine, then D.A.R.K. might just appeal to you. It's very similar – you roam around a maze, picking up keys to get to new areas and shooting down any enemies that get in the way. The ability to level up and upgrade your skills is a welcome improvement, but the way in which the game drops your gun during safe moments removes the element of tension and surprise, and ultimately makes D.A.R.K. an inferior game compared to its inspirations. It's a shame because in most other ways, most particularly in terms of the game's mechanics, D.A.R.K. does a pretty good job and shows that this kind of game has every chance of making an impact on iDevices in the future.

Rating ★★★☆☆



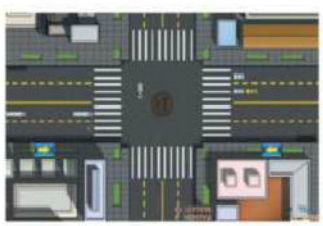
Price: £2.99/$4.99
Developer: Capcom Co Ltd

Monster Hunter Dynamic Hunting



This isn't a fully fledged Monster Hunter game, but it does offer a little taster in a very commendable way. Each hunt is little more than an arena battle, but combat is as intuitive as it is engrossing. There's plenty of replayability too, whether it's to better your ranking, or gathering more materials for weapon crafting. However, the price tag seems high for what is ultimately a string of boss fights with little variety. Plus, this isn't really a fully-fledged Monster Hunter experience like you could find on other gaming handhelds or consoles. For a kind of Monster Hunter Lite it definitely has its merits and for short gaming bursts on your mobile it makes sense to keep things simple like this. We'd still like to see the big game cross over though.

Rating ★★★★☆



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: GP Imports Inc

iTraffic Light HD



Flight Control innovated when it first appeared on the iPhone, spurring the vehicle management genre into a new age of touch-screen addiction. As is always the case with success stories like this, hundreds of wannabes soon turned up, though rarely with that same level of quality. iTraffic Light HD is one such title, removing the interaction of directing vehicles yourself and limiting you to controlling the left and right stream of vehicles. The result is an uninspired game with poor visuals, lacklustre gameplay and none of the one-more-go appeal that these types of games need in order to keep you coming back. It's an idea that really should have worked much better than this, but perhaps someone else will come along and improve upon it soon.

Rating ★★☆☆☆



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Chillingo Ltd

Color Bandits



Chillingo's Color Bandits is a game that appears fairly original on the surface. Starting out completely in monochrome, you have to gradually add colour to the world as you shoot your way through the levels. But that's about all that Color Bandits has going for it. The shoot-'em-up gameplay is as simple as it gets: avoid enemies, hold down fire indefinitely and occasionally use a smart bomb. It's a shame that the imagination brought to Color Bandits in its graphical design wasn't also brought to bear on its gameplay, because then it might have been worth your time. A little more creativity in this area and the all-important longevity factor would have been increased. As it is you'll play this for a short while and then probably never come back to it.

Rating ★★☆☆☆

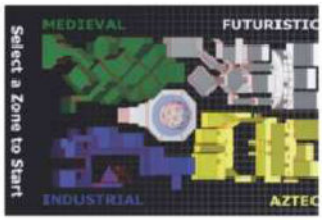


Price: £4.99/$6.99
Developer: Gameloft S.A.

N.O.V.A. 2 – Near Orbit Vanguard Alliance

Gameloft S.A. sci-fi shooter sees you tackling an extensive campaign mode complete with stunning set pieces and exciting all-action shoot-outs. The AI provides a decent challenge as you blast your way through the levels with touch or touch/tilt controls, both of which are fun to use, despite some occasional on-screen button clutter. You can also compete in ten-player multiplayer matches either online or locally, that offer a completely different kind of challenge for your fingers. When it comes to shooters on iDevices there are few that can match this one for excelling both in single-player and online against real opponents.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Dynamo Games Ltd

The Crystal Maze

Dynamo Games Ltd early to mid Nineties game show, challenged a team of adventurers to pit their wits against a series of themed zones, each containing short challenges that would carry a crystal as their reward, exchanged for time in a showpiece final event. If you saw it you were most probably hooked to it. The procedure proves identical here – and were it not for a chronic lack of individual game rooms to prevent the experience becoming swiftly stale, this app would be a sure-fire hit just like the TV show was before it. Though updates are promised, this adaptation still falls just a little short, though the sequence of spoken phrases 'borrowed' from host Richard O'Brien is a pleasant bonus for anyone who is familiar with this classic show.

Rating ★★★★★

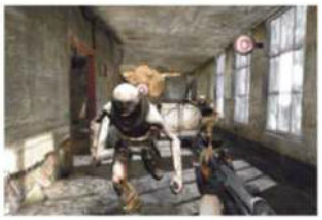


Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Chillingo Ltd

Predators

We have to admit that, for a Rodriguez flick, the film upon which this game is based was terrible, but mercifully the app is a full-throttle slash-'em-up of the highest order. Playing as the Predator, you must traverse jungle terrain hacking lumps out of weapon-toting humans while utilising your alien abilities (such as thermal vision) to stay one step ahead. The control system – that comprises of a floating directional pad and attack buttons – works well, although the responsiveness does break down when trying to combat multiple enemies and ultimately the game does get a little repetitive. If only it could have found a little more variety in its approach it would have been a killer app, but as it is it's about as middle of the road as they come.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: id Software

Rage HD

Remember those stunning videos id Software released so long ago, showing worlds of unparalleled detail running on the iPhone? Well, it'll come as a surprise to nobody that the transformation of your phone into an Xbox 360 has come at a price, namely movement. In order to keep a tight grip on the technical side of things, Rage constitutes an on-rails shooter, offering players three levels to blast through with their weaponry. Visually it's obviously stunning, and the price tag is hardly prohibitive, making this glimpse of the future rather appealing. As on-rails shooters go it has all the jumps, bumps and threat you would expect and just enough depth in the gameplay to keep you coming back to improve your score again and again. Here's hoping id comes back for more.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £2.99/$4.99
Developer: Somethin' Else

Papa Sangre

Most games rely on visuals, but Papa Sangre is different. The premise is that you're cast into a world of darkness, and must save the soul of someone you love. However, you can't see a damn thing, and must rely on sound to guide you. Using headphones is essential, as you have to listen out for notes that guide the way, and, using a dial, you must alternate footsteps to reach your destination. It takes some getting used to, but the atmosphere that is created here is incredible and as such it's no surprise that this concept has picked up plenty of accolades and awards in the games industry. It's this kind of imaginative experience that makes the iPhone such a wonderful format for gaming. Where else would you ever find a game like this? The answer you're looking for is nowhere.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £1.49/$1.99
Developer: Zhou XiaoRui

X3000 HD

With nearly 30 years of genre heritage and thousands of shooter games in its wake, X3000 HD would have had to pull off a miracle to stand out from the crowd. Needless to say it doesn't. It's a typical R-Type style game, involving one prototype spaceship versus a horde of enemies spewing bullets, missiles and beams in the faint hope that one of them will destroy your ship. What else? You collect power-ups and control your vessel with your finger while it automatically sprays an unlimited stream of ammunition. It's a side-scrolling largely by the numbers, but it's familiarity doesn't make it bland. There's enough smart design here and enough quality in the visuals to make this stand out from the crowd and be a successor to all those arcade classics.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: Free
Developer: Daniel Blezek

Marathon 1

Before Halo, there was Marathon, and here it is getting a re-release on the most unlikely of platforms. Previous experience (and therefore necessary nostalgia) is really the best way to benefit from this app. The shooting mechanics work well enough, but aiming and sensitivity issues means pulling off difficult shots can become an arduous task, especially against the more agile and dangerous opponents. Additionally, you'll have to pay extra to unlock the HD and cheat modes if you want the full Marathon Experience. If you're familiar with Bungie's work since this game on titles such as Halo don't expect the same level of polish and tightness of gameplay as those games. This is an FPS from a very different age and has much more in common with Doom.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £4.99/$6.99
Developer: Telltale Games

Puzzle Agent 2 HD

The first Puzzle Agent, released in 2010, remains one of the best puzzle games available on the App Store. Featuring a quirky Twin Peaks-style plot, wrapped around a series of gentle but challenging brain teasers, it offered a couple of hours of adventure gaming that occupied its own unique space. Sadly, now that the sequel has arrived, that's no longer the case, as Puzzle Agent 2 is almost completely identical to the first game. The locations are the same, the cast of characters largely unchanged and even the plot picks up directly after the last one and revisits exactly the same case to tie up its loose ends.

Puzzle Agent 2 isn't really a bad game, it's just there's very little to see here if you've already played the first game.

Rating ★★★★★

Arcade



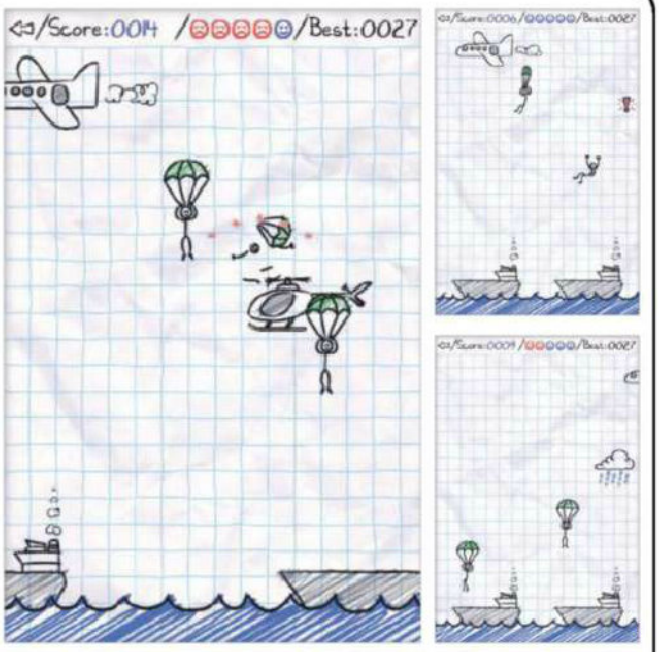
The age of the coin operated arcade cabinets may be behind us, but their spirit lives on in games like this. It's all about score chasing, instant action and the kind of addictive gameplay you can't walk away from.

Top Paid Apps	Top Free Apps
Space Invaders Infinity Gene ★★★★★	Harbor Master HD ★★★★★
The King Of Fighters-i ★★★★	Galaga 30th Collection ★★★★½
Street Fighter IV Volt ★★★★½	LightBike 2 ★★★★½

Staff pick of the section

Peggle ★★★★½

Pac-Man CE ★★★★★



Parachute Panic's visuals and humour adds immensely to its charm.

Price: £1.49/$1.99 **Developer:** FDG Mobile Games GbR

Parachute Panic HD

Whatever you do, be sure not to panic



From the moment you view Parachute Panic's hand-drawn stickman visuals and listen to its laid-back theme tune being hummed, you'll know you're holding something special in your hands.

Parachutists randomly leap from overhead planes and you must use gusts of wind – created by swiping your finger in any direction – to guide them to the boats at the bottom of the screen. Tapping a parachutist will open his 'chute and it's possible to leave the opening to the last minute in order to increase your score.

To make things more difficult a variety of different hazards ranging from thunderclouds to hungry sharks will do their best to get in your way. Needless to say, as the levels progress you'll find your reactions tested to the limit as the suicidal stickmen keep leaping to their doom. Smart, funny and clever, Parachute Panic's small asking price makes it another essential download.

Rating ★★★★½



New characters that were introduced in Street Fighter IV are still present and correct in Volt.

He won't be getting up from that – Zangief's Ultra attacks are as devastating as always in SFIV Volt.



If you've seen this screen, you've done well. If you played as Dhalsim and not against him, obviously.





Price: £4.99/$6.99 **Developer:** Capcom Co Ltd

Street Fighter IV Volt

Almost the king of the ring



When Capcom gave birth to Street Fighter, it did so in an arcade cabinet. Not literally, of course. The point is that having the benefit of a cabinet meant it was a game tailored around having a joystick and six buttons and has evolved with that control method in mind.

You can see where this is going. Shrinking a game that relies on a number of buttons that even bewilders some gaming veterans is a challenge. Consider this: if you're playing as Guile on Street Fighter IV, to activate his Ultra move you have to hold down/back for a few seconds, then press down/forward, then press down/back, then press up/towards and all three kick buttons at the same time. Try that on your iPhone and the only move you'll be pulling off is the catch-the-phone-that-just-slipped-out-of-your-hand manoeuvre.

So this is Capcom's solution. Special moves, such as the one just described, have been simplified. The six buttons have been squashed down to two, with an extra button to help with special moves (SP) and another one for the Focus attacks (F). The moves themselves have been simplified, so instead of doing backwards then towards with punch to perform Blanka's horizontal roll, you just press backwards and SP.

How does it all come together? Well enough. It's not too easy and not too hard. Meanwhile, to do Ultras, you now tap the Ultra symbol in the corner of the screen rather than going through with the down/back, down/right, spin around and touch your toes spellcasting ritual just to get a move out. It does change things a bit, but it's as good a compromise as we'll get. What's nice is Capcom has streamlined the control system but hasn't dumbed down the gameplay to match, so the combo system that made Street Fighter IV deep and rewarding remains intact.

It's a good job too, because for Street Fighter IV Volt, online play is now a big part of the appeal. You can play single-player for the basic few-fights-then-boss structure as you get in every fighting game, but the fact that you can be challenged by any other Volt player during this time speaks volumes about where Capcom wants to take the series. Your online record is displayed proudly at all times so you always know how well you're doing.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Gameloft S.A.

Star Battalion HD

Explosive space shooter that's not quite out of this world



iOS developers have a particularly difficult quandary on their hands, and at any point the possibility of producing a space shooter inevitably crops up. After all, the production of some genres of videogame that were designed for an age in which one control stick was the norm has proven troubling enough. Like the modifier button-heavy Lylat Wars back on the Nintendo 64, Star Battalion suffers somewhat from a lack of accurately controlled movement, relying on the employment of a touch screen as a fallback. Which is a shame, seeing as this would have otherwise been a tidy, enjoyable shooter, albeit one that is over far too soon.

Set amid pretty much the most generic intergalactic civil war setting you're ever likely to see, players must navigate through a series of missions, based primarily on neutralising ground-based targets from the air, but occasionally dabbling in some regular dogfighting. Again, the limits of the available input mechanisms essentially dictate that this should be the case. Utilising a virtual stick for movement, the game dictates that players must swipe their finger vertically across the screen to perform U-turns, and horizontally for barrel rolls. Both of these are too simple to pull off, with accidental manoeuvres taking place at inopportune moments as players attempt to use another piece of screen furniture to speed up or slam on the brakes. All in all, things prove just a little too fiddly to be relied upon in the heat of war – and that's not even including the secondary weaponry that appears chronically incapable of hitting the highlighted target, which proves incredibly annoying.

A crying shame, as there's easily enough variety to satisfy even the most irritable iPad user. The set-piece bosses require a little more thought from gamers than is involved simply in steaming headlong for the nearest red reticule, firing wildly.

There's also the prospect of multiplayer action for the hardier of souls, with its legion of ships each taking their own abilities into battle. Overall then, Star Battalion represents a flawed but nevertheless sterling attempt to mould 3D space combat onto the iPad.

Rating ★★★★★



While Star Battalion's polygon count isn't all that high, it isn't a game without beauty…



Story sections play out via text and accompanying speech. Typically, it's all rather corny.

Marvel KAPOW! HD

Price: £2.49/$3.99 **Developer:** Smith & Tinker, Inc

Is this Marvel offering more miss than hit?



The artwork is brilliant, all in true Marvel style.







At first glance you might think this looks somewhat similar to a certain fruit-based ninja-slicing game and… well you wouldn't be wrong. Employing the same basic mechanics that made the aforementioned game so fun, Marvel KAPOW! offers something different to its source of influence.

In Marvel KAPOW! you're tasked with battling Dr Doom's evil horde of minions with the help of some of the publishing titan's best-known characters' abilities; namely Wolverine's claws, Thor's hammer, Captain America's shield and Spider-Man's webs. Four different powers in a fun gameplay environment seems a recipe for obvious success.

However, you'll quickly find that the game doesn't have many other ideas other than to throw wave after wave of enemies at you. While it's initially fun using the intuitive controls to unleash destruction on the flying heads, there's only so long you'll want to do it for.

Rating ★★☆☆☆

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** PAN Vision AB

Pirates vs Ninjas vs Zombies vs Pandas HD

For copyright reasons, they're not angry…



It's inevitable that a game like Angry Birds will have some imitators, and this seems like a prime example. Look beyond the superficial similarities though, and you'll find some nifty ideas. For example, you can see the trajectory of your previous shot, avoiding the scatter-gun approach that could result on Angry Birds' more difficult stages. There's also more scope for more creative level designs, with touches like the ability to fire your variously skilled 'ammo', some of which have properties such as setting fire to wooden structures, which is rather handy.

But even with these in its favour, the game lacks the immediacy of Angry Birds. It seems to have a much steeper learning curve, and is burdened by the presence of friendly characters who must not be killed. In a game that's built around randomness, such precision is frustrating.



These giant pandas can be used to your advantage.

Rating ★★★☆☆

Price £1.99/$2.99 **Developer:** Popcap

Peggle

More addictive than something very, very naughty

Peggle has been a huge success story for PopCap Games and it's really not difficult to see why that is. Peggle is a simple game to play, but extremely difficult to master, and what initially appears to be nothing more than a game of chance soon turns out to be one of the most strategic (and cutest) games you can buy on Apple's machine. With ten balls at your disposal the aim of Peggle is to clear the 25 orange pegs that appear in various strategic locations on each of Peggle's 55 game screens. Peggle may sound simple, but it's is far from easy, however, as a further 75 blue pegs have been dotted about the stage as well. Fire off a ball and it will slowly ping and pong its way downwards, clearing any coloured pegs that it hits on the way down, hopefully making your next shot that little bit easier.

Score a set amount of points or drop your ball in the bucket that continuously floats backwards and forwards across the bottom of the screen and you'll earn yourself a new ball. Green pegs are also found on each screen, giving you a variety of power-ups that range from exploding pegs to multiballs. And that's Peggle in a nutshell. It sounds like it is entirely down to chance, but the ability to time your shot, change its trajectory and a variety of other elements means that this is far from the case and the end result is one of the most addictive games we've played on the iPhone to date. Peggle's gameplay is further enhanced by PopCap's wonderful presentation that adds an excellent multiplayer mode, a variety of different characters to defeat – each with their own special power-ups – various gameplay modes and a trophy room for completing specific tasks. It's even possible to save your best shots. Indeed the only oversight of PopCap's fantastic arcade game is that there's no online leaderboards for you to compare yourself against and it drains your battery life like a digital vampire. Already a huge success on both PCs and Macs we'd go so far as to say that this latest version is the best iteration yet.

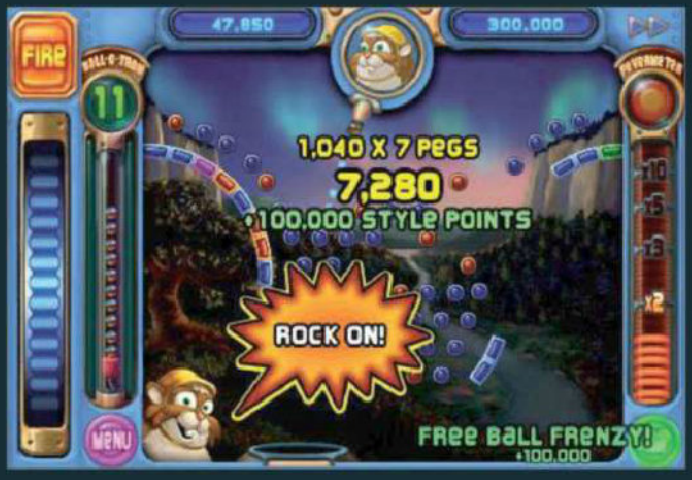


One power-up in Peggle gives you an extra ball that can increase your score.

Rating ★★★★★



Peggle's level design is absolutely superb and takes time to master.



Peggle's presentation is faultless. All that's missing is online leaderboards.

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Taito Corporation

Space Invaders: Infinity Gene

An evolution three decades in the making

After being bowled over with Taito's Space Invaders Extreme, we didn't think the 31-year-old franchise had anything more to offer. How wrong we were…

Infinity Gene is an astonishing achievement, primarily because Taito has created the game with Apple's device in mind from the very beginning. As a result Infinity Gene features superb controls, spectacular old-school visuals and funky music that's perfectly suited to listening through a pair of decent headphones.



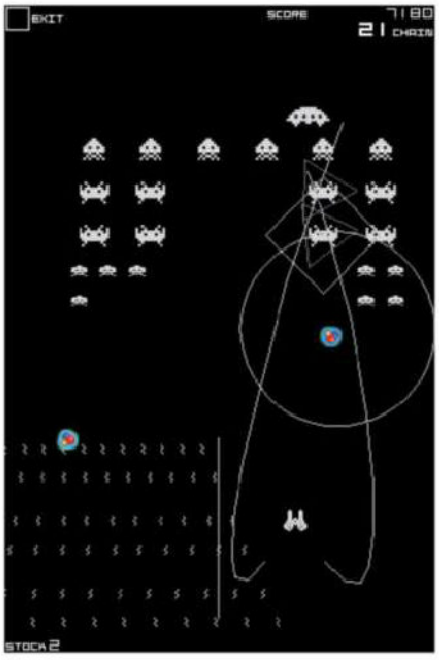
Initially, though, you may wonder what all the fuss is about, as it starts off as an identical version of the crusty old shooter that first appeared in 1978. Several seconds later, a quote from Charles Darwin appears, Taito proudly announces that 'The King of Games Strikes Back' and the franchise evolves into one of the most exciting shooters you may ever see on Apple's machine.

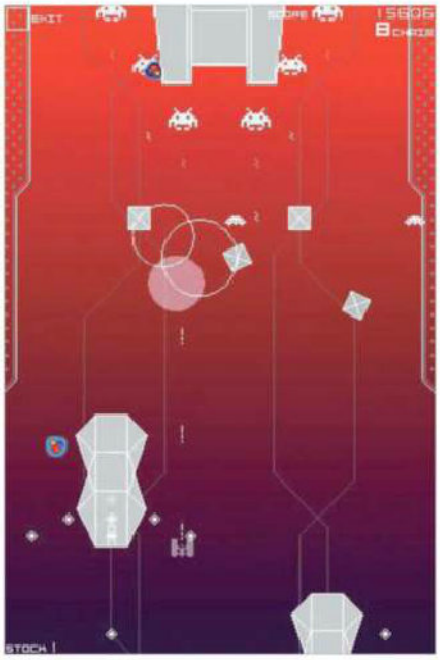
At first you're confined to simple left and right movements, but as the game progresses both your ship and the enemies you fight against continue to evolve until you're flying around the screen with simple adjustments of your finger and raining down death on anything that's crazy enough to get in your way.

Rather than confine you to a virtual stick like many shooters, Taito's choice of movement ensures that you'll never suffer from an accidental slip of the thumb. It allows you to concentrate on the constantly shifting gameplay and really appreciate just how much effort has gone into this fantastic app.

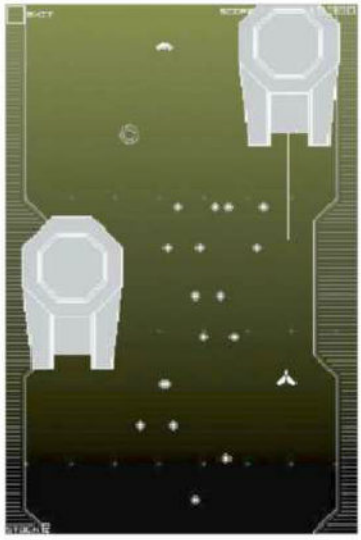
To ensure that boredom never happens – as if – Taito has given you plenty of reasons for constantly returning to its cool shooter. Multiple routes, a variety of excellent power-ups, huge bosses and there's even the ability to change the game's audio and graphics. Best of all though is the ability to import any song from your library and use it as a background, with the on-screen aliens attacking you based on the beats of your chosen song. It's not only an excellent addition to the franchise but proves that any game is only limited by the shackles imposed by its developers. Stunning, simply stunning and worth every penny.

Rating ★★★★★





Infinity Gene's crisp retro-styled visuals look absolutely spectacular.



Taito has given players plenty of reasons to come back to Infinity Gene again and again.

Price: £1.49/$1.99 **Developer:** Namco Networks America

Star Trigon

Save the galaxy a planet at a time



Namco's Star Trigon is part of the Mr Driller franchise and is an obscure coin-op from 2002. It also makes for a surprisingly fun, if limited iPhone game. Unlike other games in the Mr Driller universe, the aim of Star Trigon is to rescue weird little creatures called Uchujin. This is achieved by trapping them within trigons (basically triangles). Numerous planets are dotted around each screen and your character, one of three, will continually run around them until you tap the screen and launch him to an adjacent planet. Oh, and did we mention that you're up against a tight time limit and that a wrong move will see you drifting off helplessly into the ether? With its cute and nutty visuals, straightforward controls and challenging level design, Star Trigon is definitely worth picking up if you're looking for something a little different. Providing you excuse its repetitive nature and lack of online scoreboards.

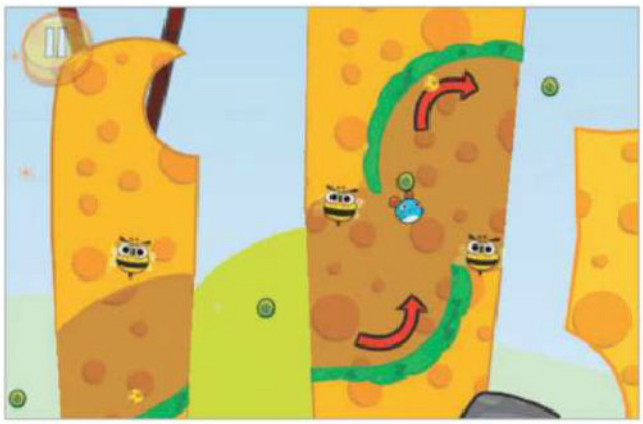
Rating ★★★★★





■ This bonus stage requires you to collect as many sweets as you can.

■ Most levels are sectioned off by a barrier. Break it too many times and you'll fly off.





■ Unlocking increasingly silly accessories is a neat reward for collecting all the cheese crumbs.

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Munkadoo Games LLC

Bouncy Mouse

Fun with physics, but no birds



While Angry Birds has spawned its fair share of clones, it's interesting to see Munkadoo Games take the basic idea and really run away with it, using slingshot physics not simply to knock objects over, but to progress through a platform-style world. The aim of each stage is to hurl the titular rodent around the level, touch-sliding to pull him back to the extent of his elasticated tail, and then throwing him between a series of pegs, which if he passes close enough, he'll grab onto. There's also a cheese crumb trail to try and gather up for those committed beyond simple level completion.

While the devious, exacting nature of some of the level design can become frustrating, the first run-through a level is often completed as much due to luck as judgement. Although Bouncy Mouse lacks the flow of Angry Birds, it can be a slightly more cerebral experience if its depths are fully explored.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Namco Networks America

Pac-Man Championship Edition

Namco's biggest mascot receives a brand new makeover



For all its importance to videogame culture, the original Pac-Man is an extremely boring game. Already available on the iPhone, along with its superior sequel Ms Pac-Man, Namco has also released its hit Xbox Live Arcade game – and it's the best version of the game ever made.

The beauty here is that Pac-Man Championship Edition is all about the chasing of high scores, and it does this brilliantly thanks to the Facebook integration that allows for weekly online tournaments between your friends.

The core concept of Pac-Man Championship Edition still has you munching dots and power-pills, but the focus is now on time attacks. Each maze is split in half and effectively mirrors itself. Once you've cleared the initial dots on one side of the maze, a fruit icon will appear on the other side. Eat this fruit and it will generate a new dot layout on the opposite half of the maze. This carries on until you run out of lives or time (games are typically between three and five minutes in length). The real beauty of Championship Edition, however, is that it's possible to keep ghosts flashing by strategically munching extra power-pills at specific times, allowing you to continually improve your combo.

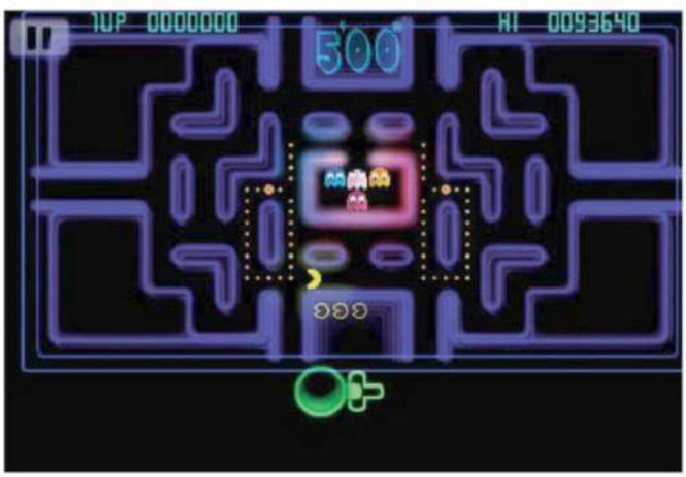
The above adds an amazing amount of depth to the original Pac-Man play mechanic, and is further improved with a variety of additional gameplay modes (although Challenge mode costs an additional cash to unlock). Championship mode is the main meat-and-potatoes of the game, Mission mode gives you a set amount of time to do everything from clearing all the on-screen dots to eating a set number of ghosts, while Challenge mode ups up the difficulty factor and gives you even harder tasks to complete.

Add in the recent integration of Facebook, allowing you to complete in weekly tournaments with friends (providing they have the game, of course), and Pac-Man Championship Edition becomes an essential addition to your iPhone library. The control methods are obviously not as good as those found on the original Live Arcade game, but this is still tremendous stuff.

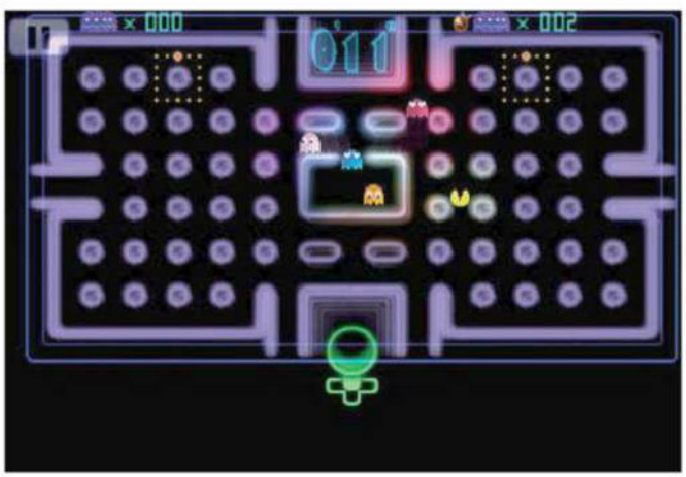
Rating ★★★★½



Continually munching ghosts will raise your score multiplier.



The mazes are extremely well designed, with plenty of replay value.



Pac-Man Championship Edition offers you four different types of control.

iPhone & iPad | Arcade

Price: Free **Developer:** Imangi Studios, LLC

Harbor Master HD

An essential download for any new iPad owner

This is one game where multitasking and quick reflexes pay off. As a harbour master, your task is to guide incoming boats and ships into dock. There are two types of boats, those with purple cargo and those with yellow cargo, with the corresponding coloured docks scattered around the bay. It gets trickier though, boats quickly de-cargo and need to be guided back out to sea. Other boats are continuously coming in, so the game quickly becomes a task of guiding multiple boats around each other and into dock. If any boats collide, then it's a watery game over for you.





Soon dozens of boats are crowding the bay.

To guide a boat, simply press on it and draw the path you wish it to take. Guide a boat to the correct dock and it will briefly glow; choose the wrong dock and the boat will crash into it before returning in the opposite direction. Like all classic games, Harbor Master HD takes seconds to learn and is entirely intuitive. As a result, anyone can pick up and play.

Because of the game's Multi-Touch support, two players can play at the same time. There's no dedicated multiplayer mode, however, all it takes is two players to tap and draw paths for the boats – something that's incredibly easy with the large 9.7-inch display on the iPad. Of course, this also means you can play the game with both hands, if you happen to find multi-tasking easy.

Furthermore, f you share your iPad with other friends or family members then it's possible to set up multiple user accounts in the game's options screen. It's a good idea to do so, as high scores can be individually uploaded to the game's website for comparison with other players.

This is an essential download for any new iPad owner, and a great way to show off the abilities of a large Multi-Touch display. The graphics are bold and attractive, with a cartoon-like appearance, and the sound effects are subtle and charming. Best of all, Harbor Master HD is totally free. We can't think of a single reason why you shouldn't download this from the App Store.

Rating ★★★★★

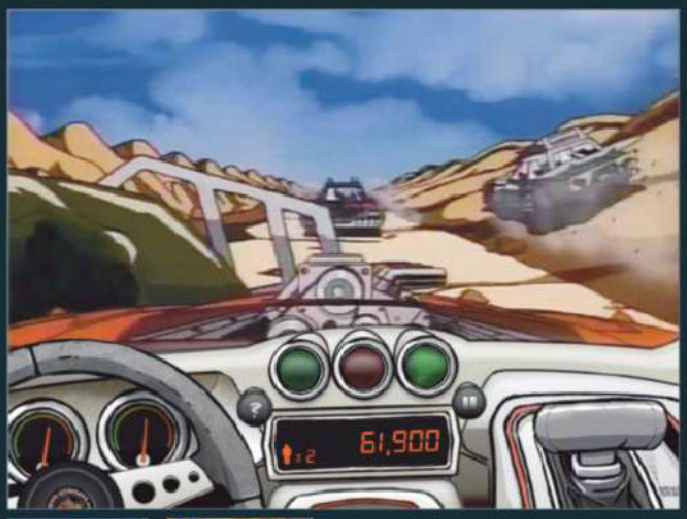


How long can you stay in control?

Road Blaster HD

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Revolutionary Concepts

More Eighties than a yuppie on a mobile using a Filofax







The in-game graphics fondly recalls the Eighties.



Before the rise of 3D graphics and videogames that didn't come as part of a cumbersome cartridge, the only way gamers could imagine they were driving a vehicle composed of more than eight pixels was via laserdisc videogames such as this one. Utilising an interactive display layered over simple animated video, it enabled contemporary users to participate in various far-fetched activities, years before technology would eventually catch up.

As you may have already inferred, Road Blaster tells the tale of a man looking for retribution over his wife's killing through the medium of driving around a bit, committing even more heinous crimes. Gameplay, such as it is, comes limited to inputting one of four commands – steering left or right, braking or accelerating – any other command triggering a video of your beloved ride bursting into flames, tumbling into some rocky crevice or, oddly, crashing into a hotel reception.

Rating ★★★★★

Etolis: Arena

Price: £1.49/$1.99 **Developer:** Chillingo Ltd

Chillingo attempt to step it up a notch once again



Ever since Angry Birds, Chillingo has moved from strength to strength, taking fame and fortune with it. Etolis: Arena is its latest high-quality offering, but the cracks are beginning to show in the renowned developer's armour.

For the most part, Etolis: Arena repeats much of the quality that has gone into their past titles. The first thing to note is the effort that has gone into making this a good-looking game, and though it doesn't answer to the likes of Rage HD and Infinity Blade, it is certainly another example of how capable the iPad is as a games console.

The objective is to eliminate wave after wave of increasingly difficult enemies by navigating the level and blasting away with whatever weapon you have to hand. Auto-aim is enabled by default, and does an adequate job of assisting those unable to manage the larger swarms of enemies, though this should be turned off if you hope to get more precision from your attacks.

Rating ★★★★★



Get too close to your enemies and the hit detection won't work, sending your bullets behind them.



Our hero must claim stacks of newspapers from the road simply by riding over them. If there's so many about though, why can't folks simply nip out and claim them themselves?

Like the original, players must avoid a host of obstacles, some more mobile than others. This music fan offers little challenge, but basketball players and dogs?



Paperboy fans will be aware our hero can score in a number of different ways. Throwing the daily into a house's porch is fine for instance, but getting it in the mailbox brings rewards beyond his wildest dreams.



Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Glu

Paperboy: Special Delivery

We travel back to the golden age of arcade gaming



Remember that version of Pac-Man that wasn't great in which he's given a female love interest? Okay, so Ms. Pac-Man exists and that may therefore be a bad example, but tampering with the classics is never a good idea. Like drawing a moustache on the Mona Lisa, everything starts to look out of place.

Take this classic arcade conversion, for example. For starters, our hero has for some reason been given a narrative to plough through (other than break some fools' windows), and a girl to chase, rather than the concerns of, say, a small boy. Aside from scriptwriting matters, his velocity is now controlled not via a fake d-pad or push button but tilting your device vertically and horizontally, until the screen does your bidding. That's right – a player's view of the screen must be partially obscured in order to progress through the game itself. To top this all off, Paperboy SD suffers from technical difficulties, lagging on occasion before tackling some of our hero's harder challenges. Speeding across an open highway, say, or avoiding brash men with beatboxes. All of which leaves the controls for steering left and right as the only well-designed aspect of this update's interface. And, compared to much better games, it's too expensive…

Rating ★★★★★



The style is backed up by an excellent soundtrack and bone-crunching sound effects.



Pick from 14 characters from across the series.

Price: £4.99/$6.99 **Developer:** SNK PLAYMORE

The King Of Fighters-i

Another great iOS beat-'em-up



Following the success of Street Fighter IV, King Of Fighters-i further underlines that the beat-'em-up can make the leap if handled with care. The series is known for its stellar animation, and this game is no exception, with fluid characters, detailed backgrounds and exemplary sprite work. You can tackle Arcade mode in various forms, including '1v1', 'Team Battle' and an 'Endless' survival mode among others.

Controls are slick, with a functional eight-way joystick zone in the bottom-left of the screen, and a rack of punch, kick and special buttons on the right. The special button is superb, letting you pull off complex moves that would have been simple on a joypad, but have been refined for the touch format. The special move changes depending on which direction you hold while you press the icon, and because it's accurate it never misses a beat. Put simply, The King Of Fighters-i is impressively close to a full console release, and for a fraction of the price, which is something other developers can learn from.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £1.49/$1.99 **Developer:** Matthew Comi

The Incident

We review the iPad game that throws everything at you



What's your vision of the apocalypse? Zombie invasion? Nuclear fallout? In The Incident it's simply mundane, everyday objects constantly falling from the sky. And it's your mission to survive this particular apocalypse by avoiding the dangers from above and climbing up the ever-mounting pile of stuff. Essentially a survival/score-attack game, the idea is to survive for as long as possible, with your success measured by the number of metres you manage to ascend. Run out of lives and you'll be awarded with a trophy showing how far you climbed, and which absurdly ordinary item was your undoing. The trophy can even be posted to Twitter for the amusement of your friends.

Controls are simple – tilt to move left or right, tap to jump – and there are a few things to collect along the way, such as coins or gems that grant you extra lives. Aside from that, however, the simple dodge and jump gameplay isn't quite as involving as we'd like it to be. It is nice to see how the backgrounds change as you climb higher, ever hopeful that you might be able to reach the top and see what's actually causing 'the incident'. But, to be honest, the novelty of the game wore off for us long before we got to that point.

Rating ★★★★★

Items are marked to warn you where they'll be coming from.



iPhone & iPad | Arcade

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Chillingo Ltd

Sky Combat

This game can be our wingman any time



The vertical shoot-'em-up is one of many classic genres that have become something of a lost art, before finding its feet again on iOS. The frenetic arcade action has the dual benefit of being a good option for a quick blast, and, as the quite brilliant arcade ports from genre master Cave have proven, perfectly suited to touch-screen controls.

With Sky Combat, Chillingo has mercifully gone a different route for the sake of accessibility to normal humans, creating a modern take that blends Capcom's classic 1942 series with the aesthetics of Desert Strike. Its three difficulty modes allow it to offer a suitable challenge to everyone, and while it lacks the pixel-perfect motion of the best shoot 'em ups, it's hugely satisfying to play.

There's a surprising amount of variety in its vehicular offerings considering the game's title, with the campaign taking in jaunts aboard boats and tanks as well as the helicopter. All three vary slightly in terms of manoeuvrability – it would be an impressive tank that could dodge up and down, after all – and although the chopper is clearly the poster boy as the sole option for the Endless mode that will provide all the longevity once the campaign is finished, the changes of vehicle are a nice surprise.

We do have some complaints, though. First up is how the game likes to hold your hand as you progress, with, for example, the presence of an air strike power-up that almost always heralds a series of bunkers, as if the prompt to use the air strike wasn't enough of a clue. Ditto missiles and imminent attacks from enemy attack helicopters. And it's not just during the tutorial. From beginning to end, you'll be prompted, just in case you didn't get the hint.

The default controls are also slightly fiddly, apparently requiring three hands in order to steer and have easy access to all the power-ups. Do yourself a favour, and switch it to the left or right-handed layout at the first opportunity.

These are but minor niggles, though. Sky Combat is a brilliantly fun little action game that's well worth the asking price.

Rating ★★★★★



Sky Combat supports Achievements through Chillingo's Crystal network, but not Game Center.



Explosions are one of the game's prettier graphical flourishes.



Bosses provide a stiffer challenge than the basic cannon fodder, and are most likely to cost lives.

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3

Sadly, there's nothing 'ultimate' about this...

There are many things that the iPad can emulate brilliantly, but if there's one thing that touch screen will never perfectly replicate, it's the tactile precision of a quality arcade stick. Despite the excuse that Mortal Kombat has never really been a series where such precision is important, you'd still like to be able to say you feel in control. And sadly for UMK3, this isn't really the case.

Beyond the fiddly controls, things don't exactly get much better for Mortal Kombat fans. This is Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3 in name only, an ugly polygonal cast replacing the campy retro charm of the original's digitised combatants, with only half of the fighters being bothered to show up. Robotic duo Sektor and Cyrax are absent, house favourite Kabal apparently took the day off, and those that did decide to turn up look terrible, with the poorly animated, budget 3D models doing even the most iconic characters no favours whatsoever. It's such a shame.

But worst of all is the fighting itself, which is something of an unpredictable mess compared to the infinitely superior transfer of Street Fighter IV. Even the most devout Mortal Kombat fan couldn't argue that this is a good game, let alone a good fighting game. Perhaps due to hardware limitations it sullies the name of what is arguably the series' peak, and every time we see those horrific new character models, the announcer's booming "Finish Him!" seems more like a request aimed more at putting this game out of its misery. A crying shame.

Rating ★★☆☆☆



This is the best you'll see Liu Kang look. When in motion, the characters look like confused, incoherent and slightly messy.



The AI is shocking; walking into obvious traps one minute, and reading your mind the next. Erratic is not the word… actually, yes it is.





In a move that openly flies in the face of everything that the Mortal Kombat series stands for, you can choose to 'befriend' your victim instead of just killing them. Disgraceful…





This could have been worth your time if it had a multiplayer type mode .

Homer looks as tired here as the game feels to play.

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

The Simpsons Arcade

Family not invited



Those expecting a portable version of Konami's classic arcade game are going to be disappointed. While it certainly borrows elements from the hit arcade brawler and looks sensational, this is a world away from the fantastic scrolling beat-'em-up.

The biggest issue – although one that, we're sure, could be fixed at a later date – is that you can only play as Homer. Granted, you can pick up power-ups that enable you to team up with other Simpsoms, but it's just not the same. Then, of course, there's the fact that all the humour has been sucked out of The Simpsons' universe, giving this a sterile, soulless feel.

If The Simpsons Arcade fails to raise a smile, it does at least play pretty well, with responsive virtual controls that rarely let you down. The lack of multiplayer support and dull level design and simplistic moves mean EA's game gets tiring pretty quickly.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Clickgamer Technologies Ltd

Pinata Smash

The candy-filled game that's anything but sweet



A skinny child sits at the bottom of the screen as pinata animals fly all over the place. Tap an animal and it'll break open, raining sweets down on the child, some piling up around him while he eats the rest. The more pinatas you break open, the fatter he gets and the more points you score.

Perhaps not the best way to teach kids about healthy eating, something that's compounded by punishing you for any green pinata you happen to break open, sending carrots and other vegetables falling down to make the kid thin. You also have to watch out for the crocodile pinata. These scaly beasts will eat the other animals unless you get rid of them with three consecutive taps.

It's not really that outrageous, of course. Pinata Smash is presented in a humorous, cartoony style that's virtually impossible to be offended by. What's really wrong with the app, however, is that it's just not that much fun to play. Even on the most complicated levels, where you have to be careful about what you do or don't tap, the action quickly descends into jabbing at the screen in a haphazard fashion. It's the sort of brainless entertainment the iOS format has really left behind now, even though its cartoon look carries a certain appeal. It might keep some children amused for a while, but there really are better games available if that's what you're looking for.

Finish a stage and the little boy will explode. Serves him right.

Rating ★★★★★





Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Chillingo Ltd

Guerrilla Bob

Don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes



The twin-stick shooter is fast becoming one of the iPhone's most overcrowded genres. With that in mind if you're releasing a new game then you need to make sure that yours stands apart from the crowd.Developer Angry Mob Games has used humour to separate its shooter from similar games, and it's a choice that works brilliantly. From its amusing intro that introduces protagonist Bob to its hilarious animation and charming characters, Guerrilla Bob oozes a hell of a lot of style, even if it ends up ultimately being rather short on substance when all is said and done.



If we have one issue with Guerrilla Bob it's that there's very little actual depth to it, with the seven levels being very easy to complete.

As with many of the latest iPhone games, Guerrilla Bob looks fantastic, with brilliantly detailed sprites, wonderfully varied locations and excellent animation that almost feels like you're playing a cartoon (albeit the most bloodiest around).

Indeed the action comes thick and fast in Guerrilla Bob, and you're constantly assaulted by a wide range of foes from machine gun-toting grunts to bombers that immediately run towards you whenever they spot you. Tents house a neverending supply of bad guys and effectively act as generators, spewing out opponents until you shut them down.

Fortunately, Bob is armed with an impressive variety of different weapons with which to dispatch his foes, with additional items scattered around the large playing areas. Get to the end of the stage and you'll face off against a titular boss, all of which soak up a huge amount of bullets before they eventually die.

From a control point of view, Guerrilla Bob handles admirably well. You'll sometimes have an issue when your player disappears under your thumb, but it rarely crops up and the virtual controls are otherwise quick and responsive to the touch.

There are only seven levels, but they do take a fair amount of while to play through. Unfortunately, there's a distinct lack of variety in the stages and while the action is often fast and furious it can feel like a slog to get through. Longevity is added thanks to an upgrade delivering Mercenary mode.

Rating ★★★★★



Survival pits you against hordes of enemies. Your job is to take them down.



Some of the bosses can be a nightmare to kill, often taking loads of damage.

Price: Free Developer: Jirbo, Inc

Marble Mash HD

Guide a floating marble through outer space



Marble Mash HD tasks you with guiding a glass marble through outer space, with the goal of reaching the sun before the time limit runs out. Giant walls create paths to navigate, and along the way you need to avoid floating galaxies that suck the marble in. The game uses the accelerometer to guide the marble, and it's a control method that works well. However, the graphics lack polish, and the sound effects become repetitive pretty quickly.



■ Avoid the galaxies, otherwise it's game over.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Jonathan Mulcahy

Obliteration HD

It's time to drop da bomb



Pure destruction is always fun, so Obliteration has quickly won us over due to its simplistic idea, gorgeous visuals and clever gameplay. A plane flies overhead a crayon-drawn city, and you simply tap the screen to drop a bomb. You can either let the bomb explode once it hits the ground, or tap the screen again to trigger it. Demolish all the onscreen buildings below the red danger line and you can move onto the next stage. Short-lived; but amazing fun.



■ Demolish everything and you can move onto the next level.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: Free Developer: Jirbo, Inc

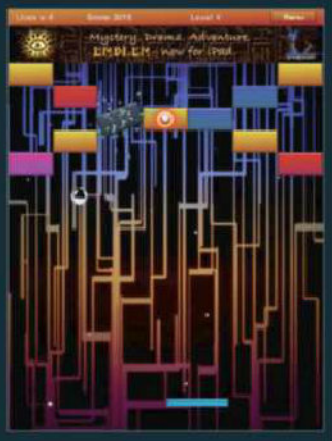
Break HD

A classic wall-breaker that presents no surprises



Break HD includes three control methods; the first offers arrows on the left and right side of the screen, the second uses the accelerometer – both are sluggish and bordering on unplayable. The third method enables you to use your finger to control the paddle, which by far is the most intuitive and accurate solution on offer.

There are two versions of Break HD, with one arriving free of charge but heavily ad-based. It's a small price to pay for a classic game in HD.



■ The backgrounds soon become vivid and colourful.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Donut Games

Spikey's Bounce Around

Our momma always said to look before you leap



Spikey's Bounce Around is a clever mix of some of the iPhone's best games. Sharing elements with the likes of Peggle, Bloons and Bumper Stars, you have a set amount of moves to guide Spikey around the screen so you can free imprisoned butterflies. It all starts off easily enough and the controls are fantastically responsive, but the deviously designed puzzles ensure that it will take an age to clear all 50 stages. A fun and charming game that's been exceedingly well executed and deserves your attention.



■ Jarred butterflies have to fall quite far to break open, so plan your moves carefully.

Rating ★★★★★




Price: Free
Developer: Atari Interactive

ATARI'S GREATEST HITS

Similar to Xbox Live Arcade's Game Room, Greatest Hits is a free downloadable arcade that lets you populate it with as many of Atari's retro classics as you like. The conversions are faithful, and the controls generally well implemented, plus it's one of the few old school bundles that doesn't feel like a rip-off. Pick only the games you want, or grab the whole lot (a total of 100 games, from arcade gems to 2600 stinkers) for just shy of a tenner. This is exactly the kind of model retro apps should be using, and for that, Atari, we salute you. Having said all that, the quality of the games hasn't really stood the test of time. One for the nostalgia value perhaps more than anything else, but still worth a look.

Rating ★★☆☆☆



Price: £1.99/$2.99
Developer: Halfbrick

Age Of Zombies



Essentially a standard horde mode, only played out from an isometric perspective, this offering from the makers of Fruit Ninja challenges hero Barry Steakfries to take down a continual stream of zombies, using one virtual stick to move and another to aim. It's classic twin-stick shooter fair that manages to keep delivering more and more enemies to kill just when you think it must have used up its supply. While there's nothing functionally broken about the title, each enemy's beeline AI makes the whole experience somewhat dull. Which a videogame about a time-travelling hero that takes on dinosaurs and zombies should never be, by definition. A little more variety and this would have been a real contender, but as it is it doesn't quite challenge the best games out there.

Rating ★★☆☆☆



Price: Free
Developer: Paramount Pictures

Rango The Game



Alongside this incredibly basic chase sequence lies a fully featured console platformer of the same name, for which this offering is merely a convenient trailer delivery method. Predictably, there's nothing to this promotional release. Stay as close to the well-worn path section as possible, avoiding all obstacles. Failure makes our reptilian hero an eagle's dinner. There's an infinite mode to challenge the brave, but ultimately this is little more than an advertisement. Frankly, we expect a higher quality of game regardless of whether or not it's tied into a film or not. This kind of rather simple gaming experience doesn't have space anymore, but then it's not as if it's going to cost you anything to download.

Rating ★★☆☆☆



Price: £1.49/$1.99
Developer: Dagan

AR Invaders



Essentially a 3D Space Invaders with an augmented reality twist. Your iPhone's camera will provide the full 360 degree backdrop for the action, and then the app will layer on the HUD and the buzzing flying saucers for you to gun down. It's great fun, and the fact that the invaders are there and present in your everyday environment will always make the game feel entertaining, current and compelling. We recommend you try it down the pub in order to achieve great comical effect.
This kind of augmented reality game is becoming a huge pull for the iPhone, but as yet there aren't many that have matched the flash of this setting with some really top-quality gameplay. AR Invaders gets close, but not close enough.

Rating ★★★☆☆



Price: £2.49/$3.99
Developer: Digital Legends Entertainment SL

BRUCE LEE DRAGON WARRIOR HD



Considering how easy it is to bolt a famous name onto an app and make a quick buck, this one took us by surprise. Why? Because it's so much more than the cheap cash-in that we might have taken it for. Surprisingly sound mechanics mean the fighting itself is of a high standard, plus the characters, settings and presentation all evoke memories of the martial arts great in the way they should. It's as basic as 3D fighters come, but those that take the time to master it will find this to be rock-solid, screams and all. It may not be the best fighter around and for the price there are better for less, but if you're a fan of Lee then you'll find plenty here that you'll enjoy and no reason to regret the purchase.

Rating ★★★☆☆



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Electronic Arts

Dragon's Lair



Dragon's Lair is now 28 years old and yet it remains as fun to play as it ever was. Yes the controls are simplistic – it's a precursor to the now popular Quick Time Events – but its stunning visuals and challenging gameplay ensure you'll keep on returning to it. Its responsive controls and cheap price make it the perfect download. Most importantly it's packed full of personality and still looks as good as a Disney animation. Cleaned up for the iPhone screen, it now looks better than ever and as we say, it still plays brilliantly for what it is. Having said that it hasn't gotten any more interactive in all these years and so some may feel a little detached playing it. That said, this is a fantastic piece of gaming history brought spiralling into the present in a fantastic port.

Rating ★★★☆☆





Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Eidos Interactive Ltd

Big Cup Cricket



Some readers might have fond memories of a more simple age of videogaming, one in which characters were imp-like, crowds were cloned, and sports were boiled down into the simplest tests of timing and aim. Big Cup Cricket plays upon such nostalgia, offering perhaps the Sensible Soccer of willow and pad. Batting, bowling and catching are replicated here as a brilliantly accessible mixture of swipes and taps, the only drawback being the way the cute visuals look through an unhelpfully magnified viewpoint. Plus, the lack of multiplayer options is a downside, but those small gripes aside, this is a nice little diversion that offers just enough challenge to keep you coming back for more and enough fun to make it worthwhile.

Rating ★★★☆☆



Price: Free
Developer: Namco

Galaga 30th Collection



Designed to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Galaga, this app offers a free edition of Galaxian (which was released 32 years ago), and includes the option of in-app purchases for sequels Galaga, Gaplus and Galaga '88. There are plenty of options enabling you to change the presentation and controls depending on whether you want a faithful or a modern experience, and the package is rounded off with a set of Achievements to encourage and reward extended play. The free game you get plays pretty well for all the years it's been since it was released, but you may find the in-app purchase prices a little hard to swallow. The free app on its own though is worth a look and should be given the benefit of the doubt.

Rating ★★★★☆



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Zattikka Ltd

Mr Bean: Out Of Control



Tying in (sadly) with the cartoon incarnation of Mr Bean rather than its live-action counterpart, this is essentially Canabalt with more gurning. Gameplay extends no further than jumping to avoid ponds and shrubs, though this does build to a ducking function later on, as the iconic 'bloke on top of a Mini Cooper' scene is wedged into proceedings. There's nothing particularly hare-brained about the title's level design, which flies in the face of the work upon which it was based. A little more craziness would have been welcome in order to freshen up the formula. So the only fair conclusion is to declare Zattikka's work passable. Buy the original Canabalt, though, because it's excellent.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Chillingo Ltd

Monster Mayhem



The aim of the game is to prevent a never-ending onslaught of supernatural scumbags from breaching the gate that pens them into the graveyard – and you do that with a meaty arsenal of firepower that can be added to as you accumulate coins acquired from fallen freaks. To kill them simply tap on them and the full force of your weapon is unleashed. Be it a knife that you literally slash them to death with or an Uzi that turns them to diced offal, you always have something to fall back on. It's a simple concept and as such it would be difficult to mess it up and thankfully Chillingo hasn't. While this kind of game has been explored plenty of times before, the quality of this title stands up to that heritage and is well worth a look.

Rating ★★★★★



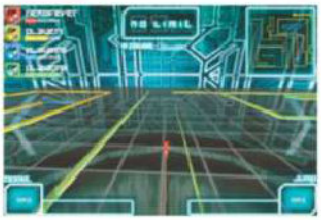
Price: £1.99/$2.99
Developer: Big

Meow Meow Happy Fight



Few of the many dual-stick shooters out there have really made a successful transition to handheld formats – this sums up why. Although its cartoony visuals are beautiful, they only paper over the cracks of shallow gameplay and repetitive design. You move using the on-screen thumbstick, and fire at your enemies by pretty much constantly holding down the button to the right. A pedestrian single-player experience would be turned into something much better with a multiplayer option, but at the time of writing that doesn't seem likely. It's a shame because with a game that is as eye-catching as this one it really could have been something special, but as it is Meow Meow Happy Fight is hard to recommend.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: Free
Developer: Pankaku, Inc

LightBike 2



With a new Tron film, we fully expect to see a torrent of LightBike clones, but as it stands this futuristic deathmatch game is probably the iPhone's best example. It's just like you remember it from the film, with a number of competitors ready to take each other out by forcing them into the walls left behind in your bikes' wakes. It's straightforward, but LightBike 2 supplements the concept with a huge selection of modes and features, including full online multiplayer and leaderboards, and several variations on the basic format to play with. This helps to create an overall package that is much more than the sum of its parts. If you fancy yourself as a bit of a Tron warrior then for free you should definitely be checking this out.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Digital Bridges Limited

Pigeon Squadron



If you've ever suspected that the pigeon who just dropped a certain gift on your head had it in for you, here's your proof. As a member of a group of pigeon paramilitaries, you must cause aerial plop-related havoc by targeting pedestrians, cars, sunbathers and other animals while avoiding their thrown attempts at revenge. The tilt controls work brilliantly in this context, being both responsive and fitting with the sense of flight and the vibrant cartoon graphics look superb. So, what could have been little more than a practical joke actually has a little more to it. If only all flight based games were as tightly designed as this in fact. So, if you like your humour toilet-like and your gaming to be light-hearted you'll get a kick out of this game.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Revolutionary Concepts

KARATE CHAMP XL



A blast from the past now, with one of the most influential fighters of yesteryear given a new lease on life thanks to this superb conversion. On-screen controls perfectly mimic the twin-stick set-up of the arcade original, and while it's not the most technical beat-'em-up, it's unquestionably the most faithful to its source material. Without games like this we would never have experienced the likes of Street Fighter and Mortal Kombat. This was one of the games that helped to define an entire genre of fighting titles. It's an enjoyable jaunt into the past, and a lovingly taught history lesson in which fans would do well to stay awake. But most importantly it still holds up pretty well as a game and you'll get hours of enjoyment from playing it.

Rating ★★★★★



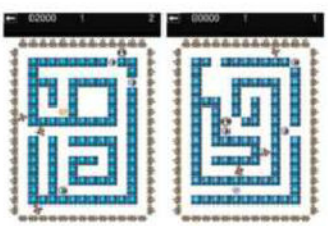
Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Electronic Arts

R Type



Irem's R-Type was another influential shoot-'em-up that changed the genre. This iPhone effort is nigh-on arcade perfect, easily recapturing the biomechanical stylings of the original. While it looks and sounds fantastic, it's let down in its controls, with none of the options holding up whenever the action starts getting intense. That's a crying shame because there have been plenty of R-Type imitators that have managed to make this kind of game work and to see this classic title fall behind the pack is disappointing. We can only hope that with time EA will look to make some changes to its formula with an update or perhaps by just releasing a sequel that handles all of the complaints. Right now it's not worth worrying about.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Erik Bogaerts

Pengo



It is the simple ideas that create the most popular games, and Pengo is no different. You control the penguin by swiping your finger across the screen to send him hurtling in any given direction. The objective is to score as many points as possible by collecting crystals, killing ice bees or lining up each level's three diamonds, all of which is done by pushing the ice blocks that fill the levels. The simple layout of each level makes your objective easy to understand, although things are always slightly more complex than they first appear. Unfortunately, the controls become a nuisance to use, with Pengo taking too long to respond to your input and becoming especially tiresome on later levels. As such what starts out as a cute idea descends into frustration.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £2.99/$4.99
Developer: Taoit Corporation

ARKANOID HD

It's perhaps the simplest concept in all of gaming, and amid countless imitators, the arcade classic returns to try and claim back its crown. The virtual equivalent of smacking a tennis ball against a flimsy wall ad nauseum, this remixed version at least manages to mix things up a little – boss battles and a new versus mode help this fusion of old and new remain somewhat current. Whether or not that was entirely necessary is up for debate although for the price being asked we guess it needed something more than the basic game. Slightly unresponsive controls sometimes leave you feeling cheated though, and a few different options would have been welcome. Something of a missed opportunity then.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Namco

BurgerTime Deluxe

On a platform where developers are having mixed success with remade classics, Namco has made the wise choice in offering its updated version of BurgerTime for a low price. But by no means does that make it a good game; it just makes the disappointment a touch more bearable. The core gameplay is still here – climb ladders to flatten the burgers down, while trapping the ingredients for extra points – but the on-screen D-pad is so shoddy, fiddly and temperamental it makes movement a chore. Given that this concept is as old as time you'll find plenty of similar games out there that have managed to update this formula to smartphones and tablets with far greater success than this one has managed to do.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Donut Games

Rat On a Skateboard

Although simplistic, Rat On a Skateboard is surprisingly addictive. There are a number of randomly generated levels, ensuring you will never be presented with the same challenge twice.

The game requires only taps, and as the screen scrolls along your rat can jump and do tricks as you tap. There are bonuses to pick up along the way, and bouncing threats to avoid. The graphics are fine, although there is nothing particularly exciting about the interface, and the music and sound effects do their job.

As platformers go this is definitely one of the more creative and enjoyable out there so for a few minutes of fun at least you should check this game out.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: Free
Developer: Glu

Star Blitz

Though it might not look particularly exciting, Star Blitz is one of those games that rewards you if you get past the dreary tutorial. A survival shooter set in space with two touch-pads to move and shoot in any direction, it's a game that becomes more compelling as the challenge increases. Shooting down enemies grants you cash, and the challenge soon drives you to the in-game shop to buy smart bombs and the like to survive. Once you begin to be drawn into this upgrading system you'll get more and more from the action. It's simple really as it just makes you feel more invested in what's going on up in the stars. Not the most inspired game you'll ever play, but it does its thing as well as any other survival shooter on iOS and for free you'd struggle to find something better.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: Free
Developer: Media

Tap The Frog HD

24 puzzle games await in this fun title. Each offers a unique challenge, such as tapping coloured frogs in the correct order, shooting frogs with tranquiliser darts and answering math questions. Tap the Frog HD also uses the Game Center to track scores and compare with your friends. As a result, it's easy to get carried away, challenging yourself to get a better score. Mix this compulsive replay value and the number of different challenges on offer and you have a winning mix right there regardless of anything else. But the graphics are polished, and the audio lively too, taking things that little bit higher. Best of all, the game is currently free, which for this much content makes this game hard to ignore.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Haze Mobile LLC

Shinobi Brawl

Despite our love of ninjas, Shinobi Brawl completely fails to reach its potential. It's extremely limited in terms of content – there's only one backdrop and an endless stream of nearly identical enemies – with the only objective being to take down as many as you can before you're killed. This isn't a bad thing in itself, but any good work is undermined by the awful, unresponsive controls that usually result in your ninja being beaten to death from both sides and pelted with shurikens while you struggle in vain to fight back. It's a pretty good looking game with some nicely designed characters and the backdrop, while being the only one, is decent enough to look at, but none of that makes up for the fact that it's just not fun to play with those controls. Best to avoid this one.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £2.99/$4.99
Developer: KONGZHONG

Zombie Crisis 3D 2: HUNTER HD

It takes a lot for zombie games to stand out, and in that context mediocrity is enough to damn Zombie Crisis 3D 2. Shooting is automatic, leaving you to concentrate on manoeuvring, dodging and switching weapons, and on each level you must take out waves of the undead until you progress to the next level. It's a promising start, keeping things simple and letting you concentrate on aiming and surviving. While it looks okay, the camera is zoomed in so far you can get caught out very quickly and never get a chance to recover. Tougher enemies get frustrating, appearing from nowhere and surrounding you without warning. As such Zombie Crisis just doesn't have what it takes to stand out from the crowd.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: Free
Developer: Darren Spencer

Shadow Run HD

Ever since Canabalt smashed, landed and ran onto the scene, there have been a handful of 'me too!' titles, such as the colourful, Erasure-driven Robot Unicorn Attack. Now, we have Shadow Run HD bringing gravity defying into the tried-and-tested gameplay. In doing so, however, the skill and difficulty in timing your leaps between buildings has been stunted, especially when very few gaps provide a challenge at all. Speed does increase and enemies will try to block your path, but more often than not you'll only fall due to an unfair glitch against you. Its core mechanic is a smart one though and you'll definitely get a degree of enjoyment from it. What's more we really like the art style as it really stands out from the crowd. If only it were a little more tightly designed.

Rating ★★★★★

Board/ Family/Kids



Games can really bridge the gap between generations, bringing families together at the table or in front of the TV screen. Now they can gather around an iPhone or iPad too and play some of these excellent games.

Top Paid Apps	Top Free Apps
World Of Goo ★★★★★	The Rainy Day 2 ★★★★½
Ticket To Ride ★★★★★	Guess 'em ★★★★½
To-Fu: the Trials of Chi HD ★★★★½	Little Charley Bear ★★★½☆

Staff pick of the section

Burn It All ★★★★½

Pictureka! ★★★★½



Price: Free **Developer:** Lego Systems, Inc

Tantalisingly, Lego Creationary's developer start the majority of its builds with items common to all available options…

LEGO Creationary

Inspiring minds with bricks



With Lego Star Wars, Lego Harry Potter and Lego Indiana Jones all hitting stores within the last couple of years, you'd be forgiven for thinking a certain child's toy is making somewhat of a comeback. Instead, the ironic humour behind a man composed of tiny pieces literally falling apart has risen anew, leaving Lego's more traditional role – giving children an easy introduction to how engineering works – abandoned. While this iPad title will hardly redress that balance, it at least engages with the ability it lends to create oddly misshapen recreations of most everyday objects.

The gameplay structure should be immediately obvious to anyone who has ever played Pictionary. As a small model of one of four potential objects pieces itself together before your very eyes, it's the player's job to isolate the inspiration, being awarded a greater amount of points for jumping in quickly with a correct response. Sadly, things can prove a little sadistic; asking players to distinguish a four-winged plane from a regular one for example, built from the base. Mostly though, players will be left cursing their own ineptitude should failure come a knocking.

Rating ★★★★½



The game does use language quite loosely. Though this challenge is for 'leaves', the game happily accepted the flowers we tapped on. We would have been more strict.



The game is packed full of fun little characters, making Pictureka! an ideal game to engage children's imaginations.



Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

The red card is a slot for another challenge, should one be necessary. You can have a maximum of three types of objects to look out for at any one time.

Pictureka! for iPad

Hands-on with the iPad edition of the kids' favourite board game

Based on the popular board game of the same name, Pictureka! presents the player with a screen crammed with images of all different kinds of objects, and then challenges them to identify, locate and tap on a given number of a certain object to complete the task. Instructions can sometimes be very specific or it can be more open with its challenges. Other stages place no upper limit on the number of specific objects to pick out, instead asking you to find as many as possible within a given time limit.

The vast space available on the iPad screen ensures that Pictureka! can be rammed with tons of objects at once, all competing to distract you from those you're meant to be picking out. Even when you do find one, a different object will instantly pop up to take its place. It never lets up, and is always searching for something new to keep you on your toes. Another advantage of the iPad version is that the extra screen space makes it perfect for multiple people to play together, and Pictureka! takes full advantage of this. There's a fun little 'pass 'n play' mode for up to four players, and there's really nothing to stop two or more people teaming up to finish the main adventure mode together either.

Rating ★★★★★

Price £2.99/$4.99 Developer: Freeverse, Inc

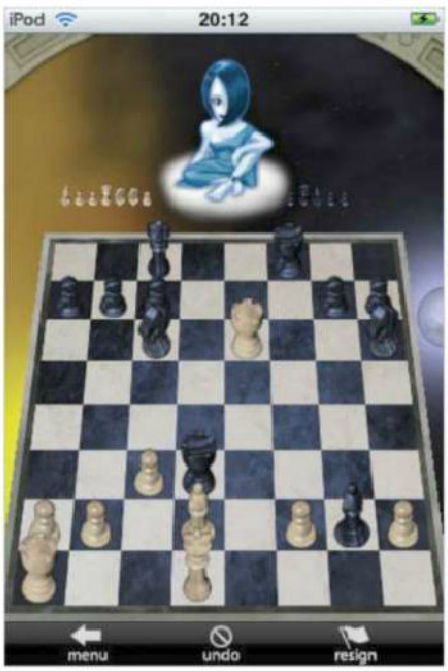
Big Bang Board Games

A collection of your favourite board games in one package



Respected developer Freeverse appears to have come up trumps with this collection, covering all traditional board game bases with chess, checkers (draughts), reversi (Othello), four-in-a-row (Connect 4), backgammon, tic-tac-toe (noughts and crosses) and something called Mancala. Presentation is generally good and control is easy, with taps to place and move pieces, but not being able to zoom in misses a trick. For some of the games, there is also a 2D and 3D option. Even with a selectable Strong opponent the AI is variable in quality. Most effort has gone into making the chess program give a decent game, whereas some of the others are much weaker. The backgammon also lacks options for scoring and doubling so is a poor choice for anyone wanting that game specifically. So, not a bad collection; there's plenty of variety, but not the strongest AI or the best-looking games.

Rating ★★★½☆



Probably the best game in the collection, but the pieces aren't that easy to tell apart in 3D.



Reversi is one of the most fun games, though you should be able to beat it nine times out of ten.

Price: £4.99/$6.99 Developer: Days of Wonder

Ticket to Ride

All aboard a classic boardgame

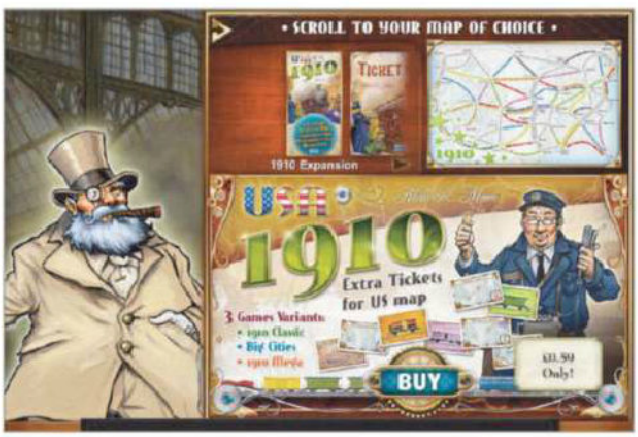


Ticket To Ride is an engaging and rewarding boardgame in which two to five players compete to lay down pieces of railway track and secure routes across the US. It might not be as well known as Monopoly or Scrabble, but this is a game that's well loved by boardgame aficionados, and now takes its place on the iPad alongside other niche but extremely playable games like Carcassonne and Samurai.

Ticket To Ride can seem overwhelming at first, but the iPad edition does a great job of easing new players in. There's an introductory video to get you started, a tutorial, an extensive in-game manual, and a constant stream of reminders.

Those who are familiar with the original will find that it's been translated to iPad brilliantly. Every part of the game has been arranged clearly, making it easy to get started. The controls are intuitive, and the online play – whether through Game Center or the developer's own system – is so smooth it's like you're playing someone in the same room.

Rating ★★★★★



The main board has tons of replayability, but if you want variety then there is more to buy in-app.



There are some helpful guides, with coloured lights indicating whether your move is legal.

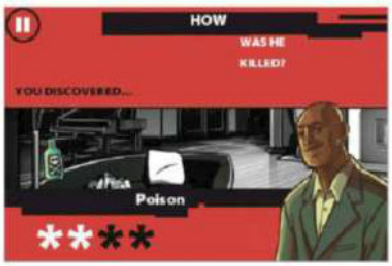
Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

Cluedo

It was the bloke with the dodgy hair and he did it in the cellar. Right?



Does anyone still play Cluedo, the board game? We haven't since we were about ten and unlike Monopoly and Scrabble, the other childhood favourites, it seems to have gone out of fashion. That may be why with this game the developer hasn't chosen to re-create it for the iPhone but instead has applied the basic concepts in a different way. First up, this is a single-player game, and it loses points for that, there's no board as such, but there is a map of the crime scene and you move directly from room to room. Instead of competing with friends, you are now a junior reporter, investigating a murder mystery against the clock. Every action, such as searching locations for clues and talking to the suspects, takes time off the clock until, when it hits zero, the newspaper editor wants his story. Now you must name the killer, the weapon and the location. Stars are awarded for correct answers, but you must get enough right in order to be promoted and take on the next set of crime reports. The more cases you solve, the more complex they get, with more suspects, weapons and locations. The good thing is that it's all randomly generated so that it can all be played again with a different outcome.



Time to file the story and name the suspect, weapon and location of the deed.



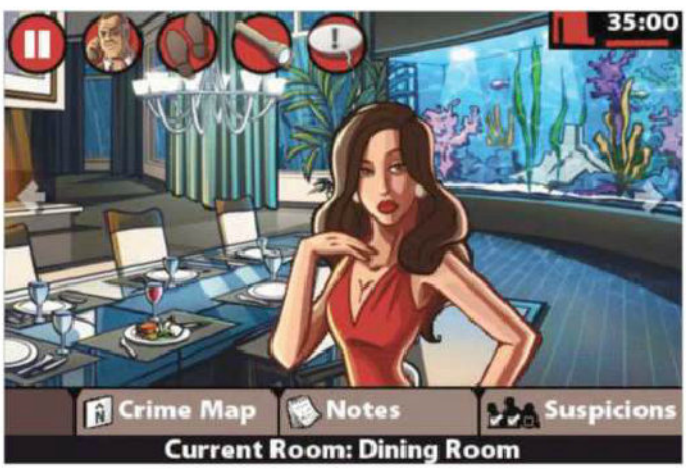
There's another aspect to the conversations. Try to see if the suspect is lying.

Along the way, you collect notes, which are all the clues sorted together, and start to solve the case by process of elimination. To help with this there's a suspicions screen where people/weapons/locations can be ticked off as in the clear. You can then either add those elements you are sure about to the accusation sheet, or simply wait until the end and do it all in one go.

The graphics are good, stylised cartoons with a little animation rather than photos, control is simple and organising the story is made as easy as possible. There's little in the way of deductive skill involved initially until you get to the much bigger cases. Even then there's a certain amount of luck involved in searching the right places and speaking to the right people so that there's time left to make accurate deductions.

The only problem is that without other people to play against it isn't either exciting or that interesting. So *Cluedo*, the iPhone game, is one for those who genuinely like solving mysteries rather than a board game for all the family.

Rating ★★★★★



Here's a typical screen with a femme fatale if ever we saw one.



The case notes summarise everything you've found out which is very useful.

Price: Free Developer: raiX UG

Fish Farm

You'll be a fish out of water if you don't spend the bucks



The Tamagotchi has a lot to answer for. Since its debut back in 1996, a plethora of game creatures have reared their furry heads, with the likes of Nintendogs being popular releases. Marine life, it seems, is now getting its own virtual look-in, with the iPhone proving fertile ground to watch computerised fish swim around an imaginary and nicely decorated tank.

Out of the sims available on the iPhone, Fish Farm is by no means a poor contender. Offering you the chance to breed and raise your own fish, this comes with a variety of easy-to-use options after it has set you up with its basic tank. Simply tap on the + icon in the bottom-left of the screen to bring up the options menu. Here you can choose from a variety of actions, such as feeding your fishy friends by tapping on the screen and watching the virtual flakes fall, and even knocking on the tank. You can bring up stats about your scaly creatures, which you can name yourself, and even change the background scenery, too.

Quite obviously, staring at two or three fish for hours on end will likely see you wishing to drown yourself in the tank out of sheer boredom. The fun here is in getting a tank packed full of interesting animals and breeding them, selling them, and then upgrading your tank. But these will all cost you money. Real-life, hard-earned money. It's great that this app is free to begin with, but if you want a truly great tank, it's going to cost you. While 1,000 in-game dollars will only set you back 59p, the dollars don't last long. Of course, raising fish well will make them sell for more, but you have to wait for a long time for the fish you can afford with the free in-game dollars to start reaping you in-game money. In short, you are going to want to purchase extra coins to make this even vaguely exciting.

Despite the cost shortfall, it's nonetheless a very simple experience, with a great deal to offer those who already love animal sims. For all others, it's frankly a bit of a bore, offering nothing particularly new or exciting. But hey, try it out for yourself – it's free (sort of) after all.

Rating ★★★★★



Using the select option, click on a fish to bring up its stats.



Select feed and tap on the tank when your fish are hungry.



Our tank has very few fish, as that's all we can afford.

Price: Free Developer: GameWeaver Ltd

Guess 'Em

Ours has a moustache, purple hair and the body of a monkey



The simple things in life are often the best. And free things can often be pretty great too. In steps Guess 'Em, an iPhone app with few features, but one that's packed full of fun.

We're sure that many adults out there fondly remember childhood staple of the Eighties Guess Who?, having whiled away many-a rainy Sunday afternoon trying to guess whether their sibling's chosen character had a moustache or ginger hair. It's a classic that hasn't been changed in its translation to the iPhone – and that's no bad thing. Simply hunt down someone with an iPhone, coerce them into downloading the app, and begin. You are both presented with pictures of people, and it's your task to pick one, and guess who the other person has chosen.

With simple controls – touch the icon of the person you want to eliminate and it spins around to reveal a blank slate – and plenty of packs available, this is a great version of a classic game.

Rating ★★★★½





The instructions are actually quite amusing.

Don't forget to shout 'Guess 'Em!' when you've cracked it.

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

Monopoly Here & Now: The World Edition

Bankrupt from the start



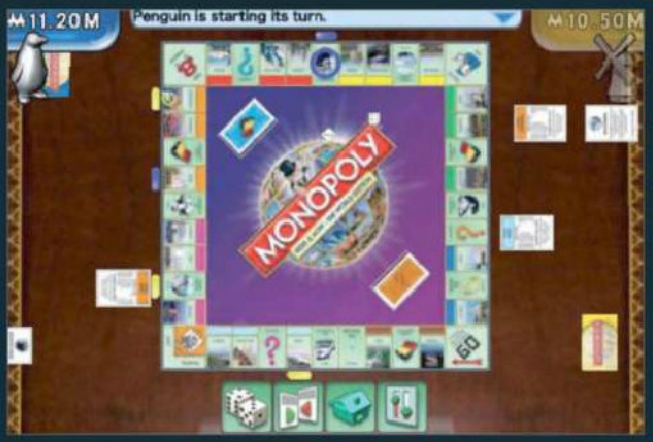
Monopoly has received numerous computer conversions over the years, and here's yet another one to add to the list.

Thankfully, being EA, the presentation of Monopoly Here & Now is extremely polished and nearly makes us forgive the exclusion of popular UK landmarks like Old Kent Road and Oxford Street.

Navigating the board is extremely easy for the most part, there's a wealth of different options to choose from and Wi-Fi play is also available. Best of all, however, is the fact the game is limited to four players meaning you don't have to wait an age for your next go.

Slick presentation aside, Monopoly is far from perfect. Playing against the computer is a nightmare, as the game always seems balanced in its favour, while Wi-Fi play is only local. Sure you can pass your iPhone between friends, but you may as well just sit down with the original board game.

Rating ★★★★★



While the presentation is strong, *Monopoly* suffers from some stodgy controls.

Price: £1.49/$1.99 Developer: Devare!

Sudoku Challenge

The puzzle that's now taking the iPhone by storm



Sudoku Challenge sells itself. With millions of people the world over still buying books, playing it online and allowing it to become the sole reason to purchase a daily paper, it's the commuter's puzzler of choice. If you fall into this category, there's simply no reason why you shouldn't get this app.

With the iPhone's touch screen it's incredibly easy to get to grips with and Devare!'s promise that you will, and we quote, "NEVER" see a repeated puzzle is a good enough guarantee as any. For a small price you may have the ultimate Sudoku accessory ensuring that you never need be without the worldwide sensation again. For anyone who's looking for a bit more, Challenge even records how long you took to do each puzzle and then compares your score against everyone else who's attempted it. Just the ticket to encourage you to up your game and top the leaderboards.

Rating ★★★★★



The easy and simple interface does the game justice, focusing on the core fundamentals.

Price: £1.99/$2.99 Developer: MTV Networks

Dora Saves The Crystal Kingdom

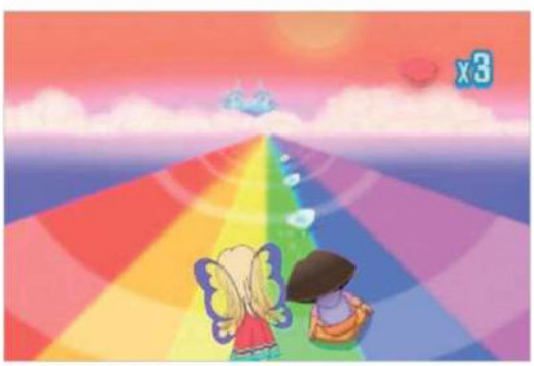
Dora explores the iPhone



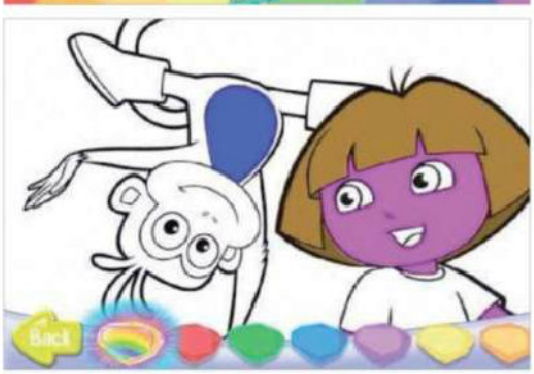
That pesky Greedy King has stolen all the colour crystals from The Crystal Kingdom! Jeez. Now, powered by the iPhone, you must ride a magic shield as Dora and collect them again. It's basically the special stage from Sonic 2, where the hedgehog runs through a half pipe collecting rings – except it's not quite as fun as that.

Dora is easy to play, as a simple tilt of the iPhone is all that's required to line her up with the crystals. It's not very challenging, with none of Sonic 2's bombs or goals to reach; you simply collect as many crystals as you can and, in all honesty, we doubt that this would keep even the youngest of children amused for long, even with a 'colouring book' included. Kids may be entertained by the brightly coloured rainbow world, and the smiley Dora's shouts of 'Yippee!' as she moves through the course, but this is sure to be a short-lived affair.

Rating ★★★★★



This bright, shiny world isn't as exciting as it looks.



Select the colour and you can fill in blocks of the picture with a simple tap.

Price: £0.69/ $0.99 **Developer:** SoHoBros.com

Chess HD

A chess game with many features – but even more issues to sort out



Enjoy nothing more than a nice, relaxing game of chess? Then why not indulge yourself with a chess board on your iPad screen?

This is a functional representation of the game in 2D. We say 'functional', as there are some interesting spelling mistakes and bugs within the game. Black is labelled 'blakc' and the A.I. has a tendency to cheat. Clearly, the game doesn't extend you the same courtesy, making the whole experience horribly one-sided, and taking any and all fun out of playing against the computer. As a result, you'll want to play against a friend (or yourself) to truly enjoy this App.

As with many other board/puzzle games in the App Store there are no instructions included – this is strictly an app for those already familiar with the rules of chess. Unusually, there's no hold-and-drag feature, either – a shame considering the iPad's Multi-Touch screen. Instead, to move a piece you simply tap on your selection, and then the space where you'd like to move it.

Although there are quirks that need ironing out, when it decides to behave itself, playing against the A.I. is still a fun and challenging experience. There are five difficulty levels to choose from, the higher seeing your opponent use some clever tactics to win. Meanwhile, the two-player game sees the black pieces flipped upside down, which is ideal for anyone sitting across the table from you. As expected, players take turn to move their pieces. Additionally, f you close the app mid-session, it will resume from the same place when re-opened.

The graphics are bold and colourful, while the board is an attractive red and yellow colour, which pops out of the iPad screen. Unfortunately, it's hard to see the black pieces on the red tiles, and the white pieces on the yellow tiles, unless the screen brightness is turned up – an obvious problem that really should have been spotted somewhere along the line (along with the spelling mistakes and numerous bugs, we might add).

As you may have worked out from the review above, this is a chess game with issues. We reviewed version 1.0.0, so it might be worth checking for updates that were not available at the time of writing, especially since as there are only two chess games in the iPad App Store.

Rating ★★☆☆☆



There's absolutely no point in a chess computer that cheats when you play it. You might as well play your little brother.



The A.I. doesn't take its time making a move.



The game is attractive, but is let down by some basic issues.

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Disney

Disney Fairies Fly

But does this app soar?



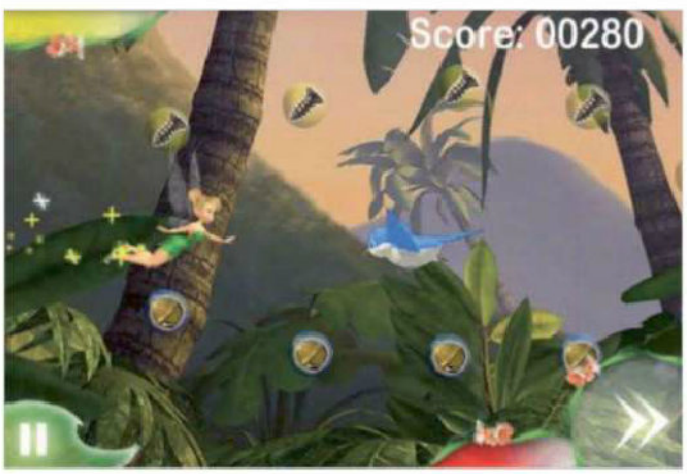
Do you believe in fairies? If you just started clapping your hands together like some uncontrollable Peter Pan hyped up on energy drinks, then boy, do we have the app for you. If, however, you just shouted out 'Codswallop!' at the top of your voice, you just killed a fairy, and this is still an app very worthy of your consideration. iPhone games are just meant to be a bit of fun, after all, not a philosophical consideration of the existence of mythical creatures.

Disney Fairies Fly lets you pick a playable character from a variety of Tinkerbell's friends, and asks you to guide them though a magical realm. Simply tilt the iPhone to move the winged creatures up or down, helping them collect items and Pixie Dust to score extra points. Watch out for birds, thistles and other hazards, though, as these will give poor Tink and Co. a bit of a bump, and ultimately slow you down on your score-grabbing rampage. We can't say these are the scariest villains seen in a game, as the cute little bluebird hovers ever so unmenacingly.

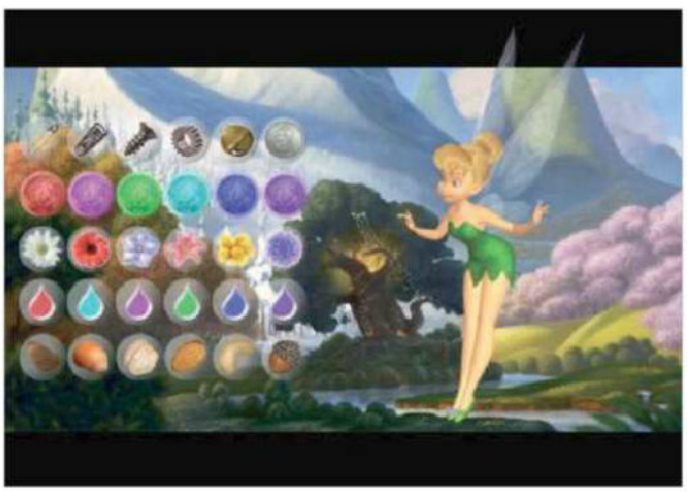
The most notable thing about this is the astounding graphics, with the game inheriting the usual Disney production values despite the small-scale nature of the project. The charm of the studio's characters also shines through, with the character designs and backgrounds being gorgeously realised. There is a very easy-to-follow 'How To Fly' section included to coach you through the controls, and then you can jump straight in with no problems or confusion. It's simple enough for young children to handle straight away, and this is obviously the target audience here, as adults may find this of little challenge. However, Disney Fairies Fly may just about hold enough charm to make you want to try it out nonetheless, and with a Lite version available, you can do just that.

It's admittedly one of the more expensive iPhone packages out there, but with easy-to-use controls and solid yet simple gameplay, this will be sure to send your children into a clapping frenzy – not to revive Tinkerbell for once, but to applaud the fairy fun that can be gleaned from this app.

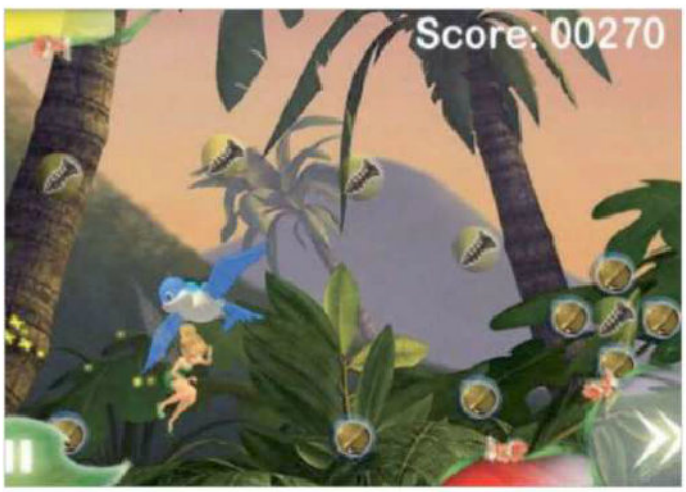
Rating ★★★★★



Press the pause button (bottom left) to readjust the iPhone's position.



The instructions Tink gives are very thorough, and easy to understand.



Watch for the birdie!

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** MTV Networks

SpongeBob Tickler

Oh barnacles, another short-lived iPhone game



SpongeBob gets impatient if keep him waiting, and starts tapping his foot.



If you or your kids love SpongeBob SquarePants, you will likely love this. For two minutes. Before you realise you have better things to do.

This app presents you with SpongeBob in an underwater scene, and you can do pretty much whatever you like to him; touch his mouth to make him speak a limited number of phrases, touch his eyes to make him wink, and touch the background to create bubbles that he stares at. If you tilt the iPhone, he slides with Gary the snail to one side, and you can move the device up sharply to make him jump. You can even stretch him and make him dance. It's all very amusing, but despite its great use of the iPhone's features, it certainly won't keep you or your kids transfixed for more than a few minutes. If you *really* love the character, though, or have a very young child in mind, it's a fun and quirky few minutes of whimsical, watery entertainment that probably delivers just about enough to justify the price, but it does little more than that and won't make for any converts.

Rating ★★☆☆☆

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** BULKYPIX

Burn It All – Journey To The Sun

Cut the rope? We'd rather just burn it



Early impressions of Burn It All might have you drawing comparisons to Cut The Rope, with a focus on chemistry rather than physics. But in truth, Burn It All is an original and unique little puzzler with the capacity to steal hours from your life and only takes minutes to learn.

The object of the game is to ignite ropes by dragging a flaming lava rock onto their knotted ends, and hope they burn out before a timer counts down to zero.

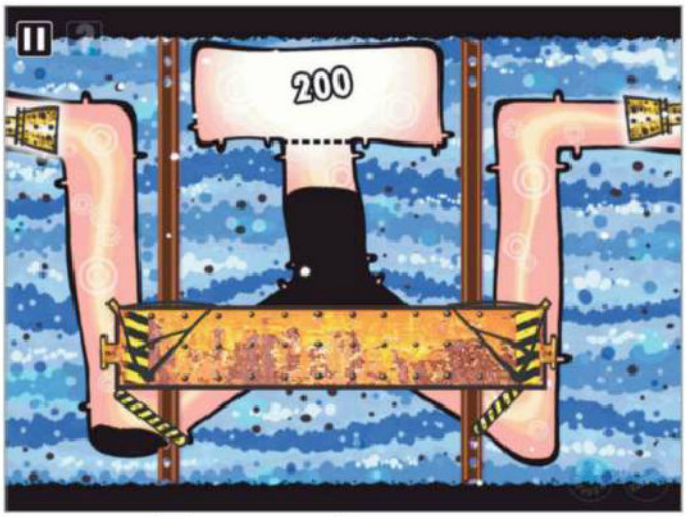
There are three different type of flame – the yellow flame can only burn the ends of ropes, while blue can torch a surface from wherever it touches it, and green can burn through multiple materials before it needs to regenerate.

From this set up BulkyPix weaves 100 increasingly challenging and complex levels. Burn It All requires forward thinking and puzzle solving, but also dexterity if you're to complete levels within the time limit. Its clever mix of ideas will definitely keep you challenged.

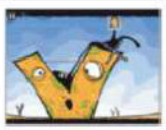
With many achievements there's plenty out there for perfectionists looking to 100 per cent complete the game.



Rating ★★★★☆







Later levels introduce more pipes to make the game harder. It works, at least when they move away from symmetrical design.

Price: £1.49/$1.99 **Developer:** Chillingo Ltd

Feed Me Oil HD

Chillingo's latest looks good but fails to satisfy

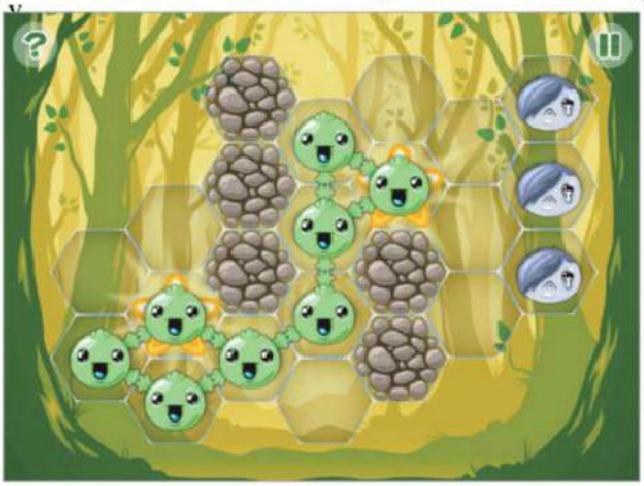


Similar looking to the hugely popular World Of Goo, this oil shepherding puzzle game is less intuitive in execution. The idea is to get a certain amount of oil from the pipe to the mouth of the strange hill creatures that occupy each stage, which is done by dragging and placing tools to influence which way the oil flows. These start off basic – iron girders and rotating mills – but soon become more complicated, with tools like fans and magnets designed to make the oil flow in physically impossible ways.

Though Feed Me Oil certainly has the looks and charm of a classic iPad puzzle game, it's not really all that much fun to play. Each puzzle has a single set solution, simply requiring that you place the right tools in the correct place, and by consequence it lacks the sense of creativity found in the more random and flexible World Of Goo, which Feed Me Oil is so clearly trying to emulate.

If you're looking for a rudimentary set of puzzles that grow more challenging over time, then Feed Me Oil is good value for the price, but there are more certainly more engaging and imaginative games available in the App Store. So make sure to play those before trying this one.

Rating ★★☆☆☆



Don't forget to include the less sociable creatures.

Price: £1.99/$2.99 **Developer:** 10tons Ltd

Joining Hands

Getting to grips with one of the friendliest games around



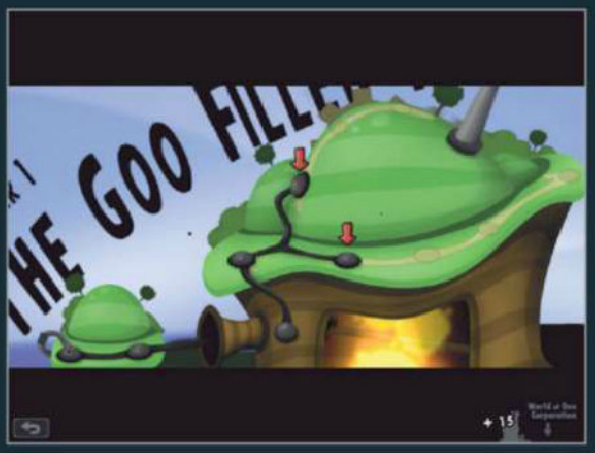
A puzzle game that's all about making people feel happy, Joining Hands asks you to match up little multi-handed blob creatures so that every hand on the screen is holding another. Leave any one of the creatures with a hand not held, and they'll sulk. Get them to hold hands, and they'll sport a big grin and do a little dance before the stage ends.

It's one of the most heart warming puzzle games on the app store, and it's pretty fun to play too. Getting every creature to hold hands is easy at first, but once the game throws in different types of creatures – some with more arms, some that stick their arms out in fixed positions – it becomes trickier. Sometimes there will be lots of solutions to a puzzle, but other times there's only one, and you'll have to think carefully about where to place each creature, especially once the game adds antisocial, armless fellows that can't bare to be placed near each other.

If we're totally honest, Joining Hands is a little too easy, suggesting that the game may be aimed at younger players, but the developer has at least included an extra aim for older players, awarding bonus points for clearing a stage. Even then the game isn't too challenging, so bear that in mind.

Rating ★★★☆☆









Incidental details like leaves blowing in the background don't really add anything meaningful, but they're a nice little detail that show how much effort went into its creation, and give a greater texture to the game world.

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Capital Yoga Publishing

The story is good once it gets going. Centred around the conflict between nature and industrial capitalism, it has a surprising amount to say about the world.

World Of Goo HD

The sticky iPad game you won't be able to put down

World Of Goo had made its iPad debut amid a blaze of critical acclaim. First released for PC and Nintendo Wii in 2008, it immediately garnered top review scores, won tons of awards, and went on to sell by the bucketload, all without an expensive marketing campaign. Made by independent developers Kyle Gabler and Ron Carmel, it's a true indie success story and feels right at home on the iPad. Though fundamentally unchanged from its original incarnation, there's something about the way it plays on the iPad; it feels like it was supposed to be played on the iPad's touch screen all along.

The idea is to build a bridge or tower by stringing together a series of sticky goo balls in order to reach a pipe at the end of the level. All remaining goo balls then move along the gooey structure and into the pipe. There's a minimum number of goo balls you have to rescue, meaning you have to build the structure as efficiently as possible so as not to waste any. This is easier said than done, given the way in which bridges and towers are susceptible to swaying in the wind and collapsing under gravity. It takes a sharp and creative mind to overcome some of these challenges, particularly on the later levels, but it's never anything less than great fun.

Rating ★★★★★

To-Fu: The Trials of Chi HD

Price: £1.49/$1.99
Developer: HotGen Limited

It's bean tough to tear ourselves away from this adventure



Many levels can be done in one if you're willing to forgo some items and take a ping of faith.

Regardless of whether or not a lump of bean curd has any business practising kung fu, it's undeniable that To-Fu makes an adorable lead for this game, bringing a ton of personality to what could otherwise be a somewhat typical puzzle-platformer.

Being both stretchy and sticky are apparently useful skills for a trained killer, as To-Fu can be stretched out with a finger, and subsequently flung to wherever you aim, sticking to the wall when he gets there. That's all there is to the control mechanics, and it's all you'll need to navigate the martial arts-themed mazes.

To-Fu: The Trials Of Chi boasts 100 levels, and it does a superb job of keeping them interesting by drip-feeding you new obstacles and mechanics for you to master just as you start to tire of the existing ones, eventually leading to trials that require the use of all of them. It's both sufficiently challenging, and a pleasure to play on the iPad, and firmly among our favourites of its kind.

Rating ★★★★★

Tiny Tower

Price: Free **Developer:** NimbleBit LLC

An in-app purchase game that won't cost you the earth

NimbleBit's new tower building game may be based around an in-app purchase model, but don't let that put you off. Utilising truly beautiful pixel-based graphics, the aim of Tiny Tower is to build the biggest skyscraper possible and fill it with little avatars called Bitizens. Bitizens can be moved into apartments and given jobs, and will reward you with Bux (the in-game currency) when you do simple tasks for them. As with similar titles, everything from stacking shop items to building new apartments takes real time, so Bux are used to speed up the process. You're only given a set amount to begin with so you'll need to buy more with physical cash if you can't be bothered to wait.

We're not normally fans of this approach, but NimbleBit has created a good balance between simply waiting out your time and actually spending money.

It's a fun idea, and is fuelled greatly by its striking visuals, but it's not long before the fun starts to wane, meaning you're more likely to grow bored before you spend any serious cash.





Initially you'll be able to build plenty of towers, but the higher you build, the more the cost and time they take to finish.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Chillingo Ltd

Sneezies

Not something to be sneezed at



With so many games now costing just 69 pence, a title has to be really special in order to make it stand apart from its competitors. So here's our own little shout out to the wonderful Sneezies, one of the cutest and cleverest apps we've discovered for some time.

Life for a Sneezy is pretty sweet, as they just spend all their time floating around in little bubbles, safely cocooned from the world. Of course, that wouldn't really make for that exciting a game, so Chillingo allows you to cover a Sneezy in sneezing powder with a simple tap of your finger. It's simple ideas like this that help to make Sneezies so much more than it may first appear.



The constantly moving Sneezies mean you have to plan your shots carefully.

After breathing in the powder the poor fur ball lets out a giant sneeze, bursting his bubble and passing on a noxious cloud to any other Sneezy in his vicinity. The resulting chain reaction is superb, with tiny little critters exploding everywhere and your ears being filled with seemingly hundreds of delightful little sneezes.

What sounds a ridiculously easy concept, soon proves to be anything but thanks to the clever game modes that Retro Dreamer has created. The main game is a simple score attack mode and sees you simply trying to capture a set amount of Sneezies. This is harder than it first sounds, though, as the Sneezies themselves are constantly moving, meaning you have to work fast and think hard in order to set off a killer chain reaction.

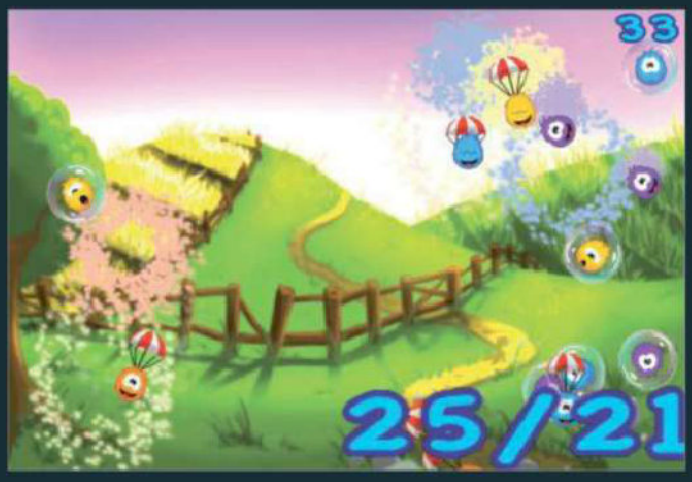
Challenge mode on the other hand gives you a set amount of sneezing powder doses and a specific number of Sneezies to capture, with an additional go earned if you capture 75 per cent or more of the critters found on screen. Needless to say the scores gets higher and higher with each completed wave and the number of little buggers increase until there are literally hundreds on screen. Finally there is Score EX, which combines the first two modes but only gives you a single dose of sneezing powder to achieve your task.

The concept is indeed simple, but excellent scoreboard integrations with Facebook and Feint Online means there's always a reason to return to this amazing, addictive game for the iPhone.

Rating ★★★★★



Later levels get packed, which makes for spectacular viewing when a chain reaction gets set up and detonated just right.



You'll be expected to snag a set amount of Sneezies on each stage before you can move onto the next level.

Amoebas

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Morgan Davies

Fire the single-celled critters into explosive packs



Borrowing heavily from the Tetris style of puzzle games, Amoebas offers up a fairly original take on what has become a pretty tired format. Rather than falling blocks, however, you have to fire amoebas into place by using a finger to take aim and then pressing a trigger. Instead of having one field of blocks or amoebas, you can play with two, three or four. As you fire the single-celled critters at one another, you need to group them by colour. Once you have enough touching one another, they will explode, allowing you to score points.

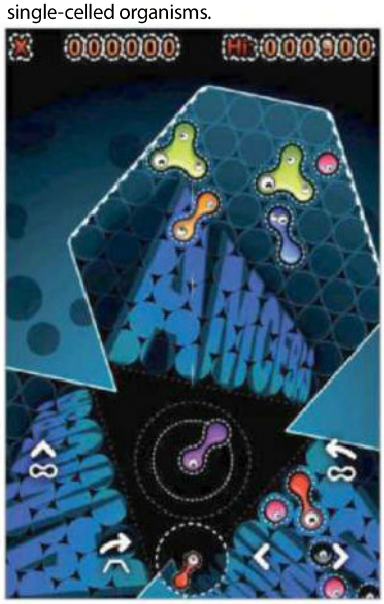
This is a clever game, and if you give it a little bit of time you can get right into it. Graphically, it's very simple but this adds to the appeal as it's very easy on the eye. Once you have mastered having two fields of play, having three or four really spices things up. This is a very cool puzzle app that comes highly recommended.

Rating ★★★★★



This is a very simple game but it can provide hours of entertainment.

Match-three action using single-celled organisms.

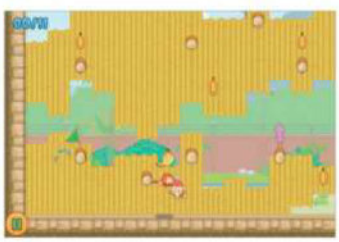


Crazy Monkey Spin

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Digital Chocolate, Inc

As easy to play as eating a rather tasty banana







Additional power-up hats can be earned by using the money gained from picking up the bananas.

Moving around the brightly coloured levels is achieved with a swipe of your finger.



Trip Hawkins' Digital Chocolate is really making a name for itself on the iPhone. With its focus on simplistic gameplay ideas, accessible controls, decent price points and games that are actually fun to play, it's always worth checking out its latest releases. Crazy Monkey Spin is no different, and while it's by the numbers and doesn't really do anything you've not seen before, it nevertheless remains extremely entertaining to play.

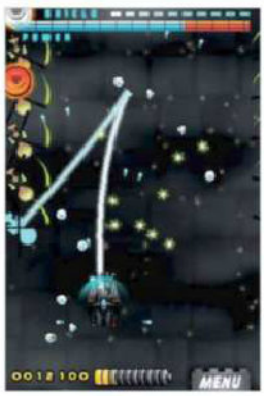
With the game spread across 50 levels (although there are additional modes to discover), you must swing from peg to peg with a quick swipe of your finger to save a selection of different animals. There are hazards to avoid, bananas to collect that can be spent on funky hats that grant you additional powers and some beautifully designed levels to explore. Obviously designed for kids, Crazy Monkey Spin's biggest disappointment is the lack of challenge and that it gets samey very quickly. It's great fun while it remains fresh though, which would suggest that good things could yet come from it with some updates or a follow-up.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Warner Bros Entertainment

Lego Batman: Gotham City Games





This section slows down when there's a lot happening on the screen.

This pinball table is good fun, but lacks the style seen in separate releases.

Holy naff iPhone game Batman!

Yes we know that the Lego franchise is solely made for kids, but that doesn't mean we haven't enjoyed the odd game over the years. Sadly, despite the low price point, we can't see how even the most ardent Batman fan is going to get much enjoyment out of this miserable effort. Although it features a fair amount of mini-games ranging from shoot-'em-up sections to throwaway efforts based on *Simon* and pinball, it's so crushingly dull to play that you'll soon lose interest. Yes the visuals are fantastic, but slowdown continually rears its ugly head, especially when there's a lot happening on screen but that's about it. The accelerometer controls are pretty decent, but the actual touch interface is exceedingly poor and doesn't always register your touch. Kudos to Traveller's Tales for trying to take the franchise in a new direction but we'll be leaving this well alone.

Rating ★★☆☆☆

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Weiwei Bao

iDragPaper

It seems insubstantial, but comes with a solid core

So, how many of you ever had an uncontrollable urge to unravel a whole toilet roll in one go? Probably not as many as the developer of this quirky app seems to think, as it has given you the opportunity to do just that. There's a lot less mess this way.

The aim of the game is to to unroll an on-screen toilet roll as fast as you can. It certainly sounds dull, but it's surprising how quickly you get drawn into wanting to get the best time possible. You soon become transfixed with learning new ways to scroll the paper and improve your time – long swipes up and down the screen, fast, smaller pinches, or swiping with two fingers in a walking motion.

It doesn't have a massive amount of longevity, but with the addition of leaderboards, your competitive spirit will be sated.



Beating that time is what it's all about.

It's much more addictive than you might expect.

Rating ★★☆☆☆

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

Trivial Pursuit

A board game that isn't boring



After being rather disappointed with EA's take on Monopoly, we're delighted to report that its take on Trivial Pursuit is far more suited to the iPhone. Wi-Fi play is included for up to four players and there's a wealth of questions to work through, but what really impresses us is the entertaining single-player mode EA has included.



Presentation is lacklustre, but this is a far better translation than we were ever expecting and as such still worth a look and your money.

Presentation is superb, with many questions having visual clues.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £2.99/$4.99 Developer: MobileAge

Shanghai Mahjong

Get off mah tiles



There are quite a few variations of the classic tile matching games on the iPhone, but this is easily our favourite. While the lack of any sort of multiplayer annoys, there's a huge range of board layouts to work through, the controls work very well and you can choose from a variety of different tile faces (including classic movie posters). The price feels a little high, but this is nevertheless a solid translation of a decades old game.





Mahjong is a great game for short bursts.

These *Star Trek* tiles are pretty cool. Hopefully updates will feature more.

Rating ★★★★★





The new mazes are more complex than Pac-Man's, and, as a result, more fun to play.

Price: £2.99/$4.99 Developer: Namco

Ms Pac-Man

28-year-old girl power in the palm of your hand



Pac-Man is already available on Apple's devices, but we urge you to pick up this far superior sequel instead. The original single maze of Pac-Man has been replaced with four new mazes, allowing for far more variety, while the ghosts that chase you are much cleverer than before, offering more of a challenge. Other notable changes include new cut-scenes and moving fruit, but this is otherwise based on the same collect-the-dots formula that made Pac-Man so popular. Control wise you're offered a variety of options ranging from using the accelerometer, to playing with a virtual joystick. Our favourite method, however, is to simply swipe in the direction you want Ms Pac-Man to travel, which works brilliantly. In fact the only thing that really lets Ms Pac-Man down is its lack of an online scoreboard and its slightly high price tag. Otherwise this is good old-fashioned arcade fun for all the family.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £0.69/ $0.99 Developer: Pavel Kozarek

Sudoku HD

A never-ending source of Sudoku puzzles

Sudoku is the perfect time filler. It takes careful planning and thought, and can easily eat up an afternoon. This version is well suited to the large 9.7-inch display, and it's easy to play – simply tap on an empty square and then the number you wish to enter. There are four difficulty levels, an auto-correction tool, timer and the ability to auto-fill boxes if you want to end the game.



The graphics are functional but still attractive.

Rating ★★★★½

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Half Fast Games

GobbleGator Gold

Hungry Hippos, but with crocs

Every child loves playing Hungry Hungry Hippos, and this loving homage is exceedingly well done. It only caters for two players (your iPhone would be pretty crowded otherwise) but it remains fast and furious fun, even if the experience is rather annoyingly short-lived.

The single-player mode is nothing more than a time attack – gobble all the ducks in as short a time as possible – but it's the fun two-player mode where you'll spend most of your time. Harmless, silly fun for the short time it lasts.



Tap the croc's back to make him munch on the little duckies.

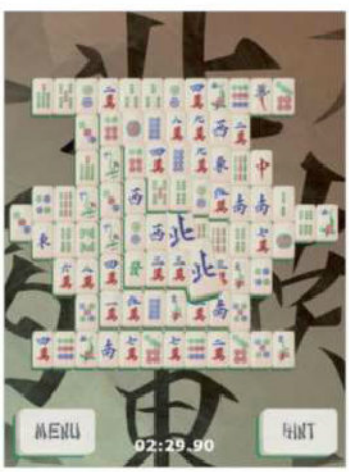
Rating ★★★½★

Price: Free Developer: Jirbo, Inc

iMahjong HD

It's Mahjong – totally free for your iPad!

This is a great free version of the world's oldest tile-based game. To play, simply tap on two tiles with matching icons – the caveat being that one tile must have a side that is not adjacent to another tile. It sounds simple, but it's a tricky game with hundreds of tiles to choose. There are no other game modes here, but considering it's free, you won't hear any complaints from us.



Press the hint button if you can't see any matching tiles.

Rating ★★★½★

Price: £0.69/ $0.99 Developer: Atinco America SA de CV

Domino Touch HD

Dominos made incredibly easy by touch controls

This is the basic dominoes game, but on your iPad. The same rules apply, with a choice of up to four players (there's no multiplayer – you're playing against the AI). The game gives you the option to either drag the dominoes into place, or simply tap on any domino that matches up to another on the board. This latter option takes any strategy out of the game, as you can simply tap on the dominoes until one flies nicely into place.



It's just a shame that the game can be played by tapping dominoes at random.

Rating ★★½★★



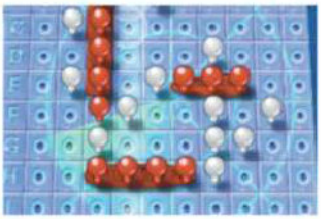
Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Byterun, Ltd

MahJong



Like many of the games here, there are numerous versions of the ancient Chinese tile game Mahjong, with almost as many different versions available on the App Store as there are variations in real life. The singular version is included here, requiring players to match pairs of tiles in an effort to clear the game board. With 180 board layouts and enough tile patterns to keep things confusing, this is a decent enough take on the classic original, although the considered pace of the game manages to get somewhat lost in translation on the iPhone, while the simplicity of the actual task at hand may lead some people to seek something more challenging. Still, with time, a relaxing game can be found as well as a satisfying challenge.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £1.99/$2.99
Developer: Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

BATTLESHIP



While other games usually feature countless fiddly pieces or scores to tally up, there's nothing about Battleship that stops two people from playing with just a piece of paper and a pen. This version does its best to justify itself, with some slightly awkward animations and a handful of new play modes, but ultimately it's the same old game of chance (with a mild whiff of strategy) that you might find on the kids' notepads after a long car journey. Unlockable and slightly game-breaking WMDs for the new Superweapons mode are amusing, mind, but you still have to sink a ton of pretend ships just to get them. Hardly what you bought an iPad for, but exactly the kind of classic pastime, reimagined that makes it so appealing.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Label Interactive

GAME TABLE



Game Table does away with the idea that modern games need to have complex AI and countless game modes in order to be popular. In fact, it's not really a game at all, rather a tool set. It's a bare-bones affair, and one that is simply meant to allow multiple players the opportunity to play classic boardgames while on the go. With chess, checkers, backgammon, reversi, go and a virtual pack of cards, it's a great catch-all solution – if you don't take modern production values and functionality for granted. To be able to get this many different kinds of game from one download and for such a small price is still pretty good value, but when the games in question are so pedestrian you would have to be pretty dedicated to classic board and table games to really enjoy this.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £4.99/$6.99
Developer: Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

RISK



Risk has enjoyed something of a renaissance of late. This is a far more traditional version than the console spin-off, and if you aren't already au fait with the rules, it's actually quite daunting. The game hurtles along at a breakneck pace, and never really explains the maths behind any losses or victories, making it that much harder to get into the game. Newcomers might feel a little bit out of their depth, but regular Riskers will lap up this much less fiddly alternative to the board version. This is after all the exact same game with no strange rule changes and all the same pieces, so if you're a regular Risk player or have just dabbled in the past you'll be perfectly at home playing this version. It's still a fair amount of money to ask for it, but it's good enough to be worth it.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £1.99/$2.99
Developer: Chillingo Ltd

Orions 2



If you've ever played a card game like Magic: The Gathering, you'll be right at home here. A role-playing game at heart, it involves elements of strategy, requiring you to add to your kingdom as you expand the map. Everything is card based as you collect new cards and take on new challenges.
The rules are adequately explained by the tutorial, but it can be quite complex for a newcomer to this kind of card-based game. You can play wirelessly against other players, or against computer-controlled characters, and the game should last a while. Whether you will enjoy it will depend on whether you can persevere with a complex game. This sort of thing can be a required taste, but if you give it some time you'll find it very rewarding over time.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Martin Schultz

Animal Match HD



The internet is awash with Bejeweled style games, and while Animal Match is mechanically similar to the PopCap classic, it at least delivers a neat visual style to make it look different. The only real difference in terms of gameplay is that you must line up rows of three animals or more to clear the blocks, but rather than just doing this until you win the stage, you must clear a set number of specific animals to proceed. This adds a deeper strategic element into the mix that helps to give it a little extra something that other such games have often lacked. If you're after a puzzle game that can give you a few mionutes of fun and a little brain workout from time to time you could do worse. Plus it's cute, so kids will love it.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Pawel Mergist

DotRace



A racing game with a twist, DotRace features an automatically accelerating dot that requires you only to press a button in order to turn. It's a tricky exercise in cornering that soon becomes more about circling through progressively more complicated tracks. The multiplayer game, in which four players compete for the racing line while crowded around a single iPhone, is the real highlight, but it's a shame that there's no option to play against AI opponents or online players. The multiplayer game side of things is that much fun and so much more engaging than playing on your own. There's not much longevity in the six available tracks, either really, which means that one way or another there's just not enough game here to keep you coming back after the first few plays.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Gameloft S.A.

Block Breaker 3: Unlimited



Innovation is a rare word when it comes to the Breakout-style brick-breaking game, but Block Breaker 3: Unlimited has something special. The basic gameplay remains familiar; the difference is the multiple segments that constitute a level. Tunnels linking the stages can be accessed to take you to the next area. Doing so will speed up your run through the level, but you may miss out on important points on each stage. You can keep going back and constantly improve your score or just speed your way through. The only irritation is the odd input glitch, which unintentionally activates the special ability when you don't want it to, but apart from that this is a really excellent game and worth a look.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £2.99/$4.99
Developer: Namco Networks America

PAC-MAN FOR iPAD

Yes, it's arcade-perfect, but for a game programmed using less memory than most digital watches have, you'd be crazy to expect less. While there is an on-screen control stick, it's only used by one of the setups, and the alternative swipe controls are actually far more accurate. Outside of that, it's still the seminal arcade classic you know and love, and although the price might be a little steep, the nostalgia value of having a perfect version of the game you grew up with on your person at all times might just be enough to sway you towards a purchase. That said there have been some far better versions and updates of this title in recent years and you would be better off checking out one of those.

Rating ★★★½☆



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Chillingo Ltd

Master Of Alchemy HD

The aim of the game is to direct substances – solid or liquid – around the screen into their respective receptacles. The challenge comes in the form of obstacles that can only be by-passed by changing the properties of your substance – if it's a liquid it may need to become a solid to break through walls and so on. It sounds complicated but it isn't and you can get the hang of it within a few minutes, but after the tenth level you can expect the mother of all challenges to unfurl. This simple concept stretched out to a satisfying and challenging comclusion makes this app one fo the better puzzle games available on the App Store and it's not as if there's a shortage of them out there. Definitely worth your time.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Kiloo

Mega Bloks

Videogame ideas exhibiting this level of idiocy only come along so often – perhaps a morbid selling point in itself, given the price. In a way, this is a traditional match three puzzle title, only that sentence marks both the beginning and end of the relationship this shares with Columns or Puzzle Quest. See, camera control is handled by the CPU, constantly careering through a preset outline 'tunnel' that allows players no chance to plan ahead or do pretty much anything you'd expect to in a puzzle title as a matter of course. As such this is a continuously frustrating affair that while seeming simple at first seems to do its utmost to unravel at every turn. How something so easy could be so horribly messed up is unfortunately beyond us, so it's probably best to just steer clear.

Rating ★☆☆☆☆

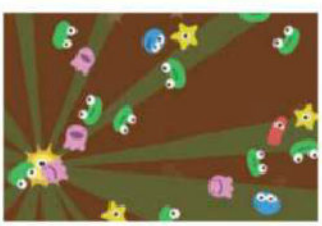


Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

LITE-BRITE

Remember those toys you used to have as a kid, saving parents even the money of buying fresh paper and felt tip pens, that allowed young mites to express their creativity through drawings comprised of plastic coloured pegs? Well, this offers the same tempered thrills, only without the certainty of having one fewer of whatever colour you need. While animations can be created and there's nothing offensively ugly about its interface, this is all a bit like buying someone a PlayStation and saying they can only play Elmo's Letter Adventure on it. Safe, though unappealing, fun it may well prove to engaging for a short time, but it's not going to fill the hours the way most of the other games here could do. Light and bright fun, but not one for the long term.

Rating ★★☆☆☆



Price: £1.49/$1.99
Developer: Kieffer Bros., LLC

Monster Soup

A planet full of cute monsters who love to eat soup has been attacked by a miserable alien from Pluto who wants to freeze everything. It sounds like the stuff of animated movies, but Monster Soup is actually an incredibly fun little arcade title that just happens to carry the appeal of a Disney picture. Each stage sees swarms of colourful aliens floating towards a wall of ice. You have to trace lines between monsters of the same type to save them before they get frozen. It's a simple yet addictive premise, and one that will keep you entertained for hours, albeit in small bursts. As bite-sized puzzle games go this is definitely one of the better ones to have come along in recent times and thanks to its combination of style and gameplay it will earn its place on your device.

Rating ★★★★☆



Price: Free
Developer: Studio Liddell

Little Charley Bear

A novel distraction for gaming novices in their formative years, this app features four themes to tap on. Each one takes you through to a video, and then an activity to play before another video rounds off the segment. The activities are simple yet engaging, and the characters suitably garish. We can't say there's a great deal of challenge really, but this is aimed at the very young rather than experienced gamers or those with more than one digit in their age. With that information in mind you may understand just how simple this app is, but its appeal can't be denied and there's bound to be someone in your family who would get a kick out of it. What more could you ask for from a game that costs nothing?

Rating ★★★½☆



Price: £1.49/$1.99
Developer: Walt Disney

My Baby Einstein

Less of a game and more of an interactive educational tool, My Baby Einstein is a learning aid for very young children. The app comes pre-loaded with several Sesame Street-style videos that gently educate the viewer about the world, as well as a series of 'Discovery Cards' that show pictures of simple objects with the name written underneath. More content is available for in-app purchase, but you can also make your own Discovery Cards with the iPhone's camera. As such this is an app that can keep delivering again and again as well as being customised to your own lives and the things you would like to teach your little ones. The price is pretty reasonable really and as apps for young children go this is definitely one of the better ones out there.

Rating ★★★★☆



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: BULKYPIX

Catch The Candy

The furry character at the centre of the game has just one aim: get the candy. You accomplish this by tapping on various objects or pieces of scenery, whereby the character's arms shoot out, grabs hold and drags him forward. It's a simple gameplay mechanic that works well with touch controls, with levels getting more complex as the game progresses. If we have one niggle, it's with the basic physics engine. The main character never rotates, even when he's spinning around wheels and other level set pieces. It's slightly unnerving and reveals a slightly budget approach to the game that is in contrast to its solid basic premise and gameplay. That said it's not so much of a ditsraction to ruin the gaming experience any great amount.

Rating ★★★★☆



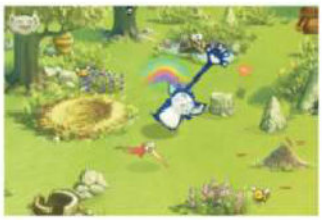
Price: Free
Developer: ngmoco, Inc

Touch Pets Dogs 2



This is a great app, dare we say it, for people of all ages. Touch Pets Dogs 2 has a whole host of things you'll need to do to keep your dog happy. You've got to care for him, socialise with him, and play with him in a variety of environments, and you can even dress him up and buy him a whole host of other things. The one drawback? In-app purchases. Be careful, because one slip of the hand, and you might end up accidentally buying a whole load of bones or something. It's a precarious world we live in these days. That aside it's a pretty fun pet game with plenty of interaction and with no up-front charge there's a little here for you to enjoy. It's just that a fuller experience always feels like it's being promised over the horizon and that's annoying.

Rating ★★★★★



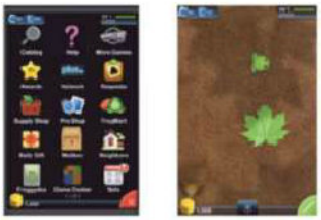
Price: £2.99/$4.99
Developer: Tactile Entertainment

Pocket Creatures



Pocket Creatures is the best virtual pet app on the iPad. If that seems like a bold claim then rest assured that we don't make it lightly. It boasts some gorgeous graphics and wonderfully intuitive gameplay, including making your creature's mood affect the environment around you. Best of all, there's no hidden charges. Once you've paid for it, that's all you need to do. With so many other games of this type trying to charge you for every little extra, this game puts it right up front for you to enjoy and asks for nothing more. Really, nothing even comes close to Pocket Creatures in terms of fun and variety, and it's one of the only apps where you'll actually want to turn it back on to check how your critter is doing. Really, every animal lover will enjoy this.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: Free
Developer: NimbleBit LLC

Pocket Frogs



In Pocket Frogs you follow your multiple pet frogs from tadpole to adult as they grow older, building up your 'Froggydex' (nothing to do with a Pokédex, we're sure) until you've 'caught them all'. They aren't incredibly interactive, and apart from tapping the screen to make them jump there isn't that much to do other than purchase bits of scenery and visit your friends' frogs. The nunber of frogs offers a certain challenge we suppose, but it's a mostly self-motivated challenge with no great reward on offer from the game to incentivise your search. Still, it's free (except for in-app purchases), and it certainly kept us amused for a few minutes. which won't be taking for granted. Just don't expect a huge amount of depth or longevity from it.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Arthur Ham

Pet Playpen



It might sport some old, cheaply designed 2D graphics, but Pet Playpen is still a very good game. There's several different animals to choose from, with the little critter of your choice making demands in return for a reward such as what he wants for his next meal. As standard, you have to fulfil his needs to keep him happy, and there's quite a lot to do, including six games to play. While typical it does all the things you would expect fairly well and doesn't cost the earth either. In case you're wondering, it's rated for ages 12+ because of the presence of a tacky slot machine you can play on, which is odd to include as it might put some parents off getting this for their kids. That aside this is a cute little game that deserves some attention.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: Free
Developer: Capcom

Smurfs Village



We're dismayed to report this offers charms with more than a whiff of Farmville. Placing players as some kind of benevolent god, given responsibility for a wealth of blue critters, something approaching fun soon starts to emerge as houses are constructed and items shared with Facebook contacts. Unfortunately, it turns out that the only way to make houses appear within a couple of hours is to exchange real currency for Smurfberries – an event sure to take place within the first half an hour of play. If you're willing to be patient and watch the village grow under its own steam then you'll get along okay with this game without having to pay the earth, but it can drag its heals a lot of the time. In summary: what a load of nickel and diming smurf.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £1.49/$1.99
Developer: All3Media International

The Cube



Based on the hit TV show, The Cube at least attempts something innovative rather than resting on its licence, but it doesn't work. Played from a first-person perspective, with 15 games from the series, its ambition is to put you into the same pressured environment as a contestant, interacting with objects by touch and tilting the device to look around. The controls are just too fiddly, however, putting pressure on the player through frustration rather than challenge and turning some potentially addictive mini-games into a chore. If it could have just been a little more nuanced and the controls given more time then this would have been a worthy extention to this hit show, but as it is we're sorry to say this feels rather rushed and poorly thought out.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £2.99/$4.99
Developer: P2 Games Limited

Peppa Pig's Party Time



Peppa Pig fans will love the games that this package presents. They comprise of inspiring creativity games and more conventional arcade-style games, with up to four players sharing the same iPad. It will have adults chewing their fists in despair at having purchased it, but it's well worth it when you see the smiles on their faces, which it will deliver in spades. It's not going to be the most challenging game and to old eyes it's bound to make heads swim in all its sugary sweet colour. But, since it's not intended for such seasoned individuals we have to give it a degree of credit for translating its source material so faithfully and with no small amount of charm. Fans of the show will love this.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: Free
Developer: Park Jin-Bae

The Rainy Day 2



We've all been caught in the rain when we weren't expecting it, and that's the premise of this excellent anime-style game. The idea is to avoid raindrops as you move across the screen from left to right, either by stepping aside, finding shelter or utilising special items. While it may be a little slower paced than games of its ilk, this game is all the better for it, almost replicating the quiet pleasure of a rainy day. Collectables, hidden actions and a rank for staying as dry as possible makes each level replayable. But while the levels can feel a little samey, it's calm, considered approach makes it a fine mobile time-waster for those moments when you want something interesting to do with your hands or just have a couple of moments to kill.

Rating ★★★★★




Price: £1.99/$2.99
Developer: Warner Bros Entertainment

Harry Potter: Spells

Harry Potter: Spells gives fans the chance to conjure up famous spells from the franchise, using their iPhone/iPad as a wand. This is achieved in two ways: either by drawing the spell motion onto the screen or by waving the device. The latter is far more enjoyable and interesting, but it's significantly less reliable – only half of our 'waved' spells registered correctly, which really isn't all that grat. With 17 spells though, Learn, Practice, and single-player/multiplayer Duel modes, Spells is good value for money so long as your a big fan of the boy who lived and will keep giving you thrills for as long as you have it on your device. Anyone else will struggle to justify a purchase though.

Rating ★★★★☆



Price: £2.99/$4.99
Developer: Ludia

Family Fortunes HD

Replicating the clan versus clan gameplay of the show, Family Fortunes HD structures its quiz around the results of various surveys – apparently conducted at random – challenging players to pick out the most popular answers. Each question has several different answers and you have to try and get as many of them as possible. It's a simple premise and it works just as well on iPad as it does on TV. Though an element of cultural difference will cause some to be disappointed as what seems common to you may not in fact give you a correct answer, structurally this is as solid as you could expect. Predictive text spell checking and multiplayer competition should ensure life beyond a few casual minutes of prodding, too.

Rating ★★★☆☆




Price: £1.99/$2.99
Developer: Magmic Inc

Rubik's Cube

This is an interesting melding of 21st Century technology and an iconic toy of the Eighties. First of all, it uses all of the iPhone's touch-and-tilt controls – including the iPhone 4's gyroscope – to let you interact with your virtual cube, and even offers support for 3D glasses. Beyond that you can play insanely difficult 'crazy' cubes, and also create custom ones with photos from your library. The app can even provide solutions for real cubes by either manually inputting the sides or taking photos and letting the image recognition do the hard work for you. Pretty remarkable stuff really, but it rather takes away from the spirit of the thing and isn't a substitute for actually holding a cube in your hand. A novelty for sure and perhaps even a distracting one, but not essential.

Rating ★★★☆☆




Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Yan Zhang

Bubble Shooter Pro

Bubble Shooter bears more than a passing resemblance to the Bust-A-Move console titles of old. Offering gamers a single coloured bubble at a time, players must match three to stop their advance from the top of the screen. Should the throng reach your screen's base, it's game over. This app's one real innovation is the 'whirl' mode, which attaches bubbles to a central pivot like a Catherine Wheel. Some quite spectacular trick shots can hence be achieved. Otherwise, it's all rather basic and unrewarding stuff and given that it is so derivative you're bound to find better examples of this type of gameplay elsewhere. Whether or not you'll find it for such a small price though is another question entirely.

Rating ★★★☆☆




Price: Free
Developer: LEGO Systems, Inc

LEGO DUPLO Farm Friends

Time was, children would be informed about the workings of a farm from books on the subject, or perhaps even visiting one on a school trip. Trouble is, said kiddies might start to question what exactly the animals are there for, and that might prove a little distressing. That's where LEGO DUPLO Farm Friends steps in. Offering 30 animal and farm machine based animations easy to pick up controls, cute animals made from everyone's favourite pre-school bricks and plenty of things to see, it's a safe and easy way to learn a few much-needed basics at no cost. Well, other than the cost of your favoured iDevice, that is, but since you've layed out for that already this seems like a nice little addition to your machine.

Rating ★★★☆☆



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Skyworks Interactive, Inc

World Cup Table Tennis

Be prepared for strange looks playing this one. World Cup Table Tennis isn't a subtle game, demanding huge, fast swipes across your screen. Even worse is the fact that the AI is solid, meaning you'll often get stuck in gruelling slugfests against your opponents as you try to keep up with the pace. Yet that's also why World Cup Table Tennis works. It's a physical workout, but it's immensely satisfying when you score points, making it a brilliant game for a few minutes or so. Really this is so much more than you might first expect and if you've ever enjoyed games like this on the Wii or some other machine then this version is bound to put a smile on your face as well as help you build up and unlikely sweat.

Rating ★★★★★

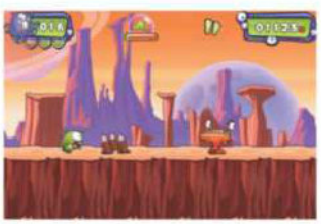


Price: £1.49/$1.99
Developer: rina Koenig

Preschool EduPlay

This app features a selection of spot-the-difference and find-the-item style games that young children will love and will want to come back to again and again. It's very well presented with a wonderful art style and plenty of colour. The games are also very responsive and genuinely rewarding with 15 levels to work through and 50 stickers to unlock to make a return visit even more worthwhile. There is even a free 'Lite' version that you can test on the little devils first to see if it'll amuse them for more than three and a half minutes. You couldn't really ask for more and when the final product is as well made and inviting as this meaning the leap up from Lite version to full-priced won't seem like a difficult decision. It's simple stuff, but engaging and inviting all the same.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: ECO Pawel Jarosz

MR – Monster Runner

Taking inspiration from games like Canabalt, Monster Runner tasks players simply with running as far as they can at an increasing speed while avoiding obstacles. It's a basic and easy to grasp premise and that's probably why so many developers are looking to use it and spin it out. The extra twist to this game requires players to fire at monsters and nab power-ups – such as wings – to increase jump distances, or a shield that allows an additional hit. It might lack the stylishness and simplicity of Canabalt, but Monster Runner is still a fun game with some excellent visuals that boast a lot of character and that additional challenge does give it a hook that separates it from the crowd.

Rating ★★★★★

Music/Puzzle



The touch control of iDevices makes music and puzzle games so much more engaging and fun than on any other kind of system and appeal to gamers of all ages and skill levels. That's why they always top the charts.

Top Paid Apps	Top Free Apps
Plants Vs Zombies ★★★★★	iBall3D ★★★★★
Trism ★★★★	Rhythm Racer ★★★½☆
Cut The Rope ★★★★★	TonePad ★★★½☆

Staff pick of the section

Crayon Physics Deluxe ★★★★½	Tap Tap Ants ★★★½☆





With four different notes to press the songs can get amazingly complex on higher difficulty levels.

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Gameloft S.A.

Guitar Rock Tour 2

This one isn't really going to rock your world



With Guitar Hero clones appearing to come out every other week on the App Store, you really need to know which ones are worth your hard earned cash. This effort from Gameloft is one of the better clones available, mainly because of its tight, responsive controls, wonderful presentation and 18 cover tracks. It's an eclectic selection of rock ranging from Woman to 9 In the Afternoon and the quality of the covers is actually very good. Gameplay wise, the ability to play drums is now available, but it doesn't really feel any different from playing the actual guitar versions (although we'd argue this is down to the iPhone itself and not Gameloft). There's also a multiplayer mode, but frustratingly it's only over local Wi-Fi. As always with Gameloft, presentation and visuals are excellent, but the limited song selection means you're soon going to be looking elsewhere for your musical fix.

Rating ★★★½☆

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Clickgamer Technologies Ltd

Angry Birds

You wouldn't like them…



It's been said time and time again that the simplest ideas are the best. For a format like the iPhone and its portable ways, it's always likely to be these types of games that manage to capture people's imaginations. After all, if you're on a train you don't want to be forced into an hour-long cutscene before even getting properly involved. For individuals desperate to stay away from such complicated entities, Angry Birds is for you. The premise is as such: for some reason a group of pigs have stolen some eggs, infuriating the birds who they rightfully belong to. In order to exact revenge, the winged ones have found the swines' 'secret' set of houses. Instead of asking for the return of what they deem so dear, the birds set up a catapult and decide to hurl themselves into the structures, hoping to bring the hogs down. Unfortunately, it's not this easy.

Controlled as ever with your finger, it's your task to pull back on the device's chord, adjusting the trajectory of your bird. When satisfied, you remove the force and watch as the animal flies in the air. The goal is to affect the target's foundations to a degree that it collapses and destroys the boars inside. Just to add an extra layer of intrigue, some birds come equipped with special skills that you'll need to take advantage of. With a quick tap, your makeshift weapon may split into three or turn into a speeding bullet, diving towards the objective on your command. It all adds up to an exceptionally fun and, at times, smart experience that can utterly confuse when you start to seriously progress – but cracking the puzzle will leave you feeling utterly satisfied. With achievements, leaderboards, 120 levels and the ability to instantly brag about your success over Facebook and Twitter, Angry Birds deserves every ounce of praise it has garnered. Excellent for a quick shot of gaming-on-the-go but with the addictive nature to keep you hooked for some time, this is a fine iPhone game.

Rating ★★★★½



As is becoming the trend, the added cutscenes are wonderfully bizarre.



Angry Birds' style is deliberately cute, but it can confuse and frustrate… in a good way.





Although some levels give you a range of birds with different powers, one lucky shot can see a house come tumbling down.

Price: £1.99/$2.99 **Developer:** Demiforce LLC

Trism

The iPhone's best puzzle game. True story



Trism is well known to many iPhone owners, due to it being an early success story for the lone coders that have made the iPhone their digital home.

When Steve Demeter's game first went up on the App Store back in July 2008 it netted him an astonishing profit of $250,000 in just two short weeks. There was no massive sales campaign, no press, Trism just turned out to be an extremely good puzzle game. Something it remains a good year after its original release. As with the best puzzle games, Trism's core concept is simple: all you have to do is match Trisms (triangles) together in groups of three or more by sliding diagonal tile sets. When joined it's possible to tilt your device left or right to slide higher placed Trisms into more convenient spots and hopefully build chains to increase your score. As games progress a variety of different effects are brought into play, ranging from screws that hold down panels, making them impossible to move, and numbered bombs that will spell game over unless you defuse them in the required number of moves.

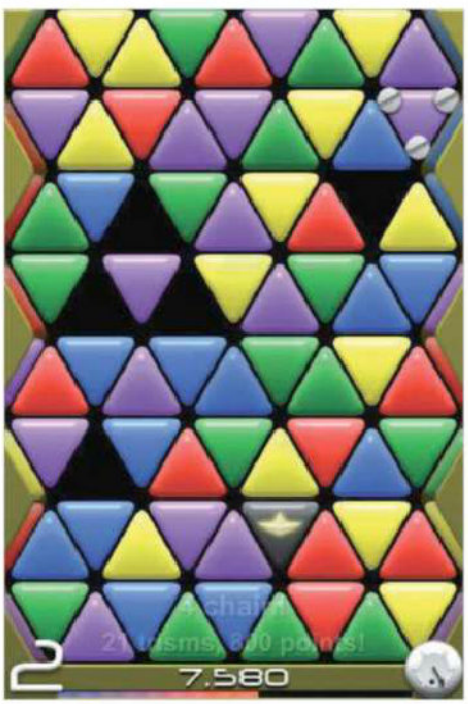


Syllogism's puzzles start off easy, but get devilishly tricky later on.

It all adds up to an amazingly addictive puzzler that we're still playing a good year after its release. This in part is down to the sheer amount of longevity that Trism offers over similar games. There are 22 different achievements to unlock, as well as two additional game modes. Both of which are just as good as the main game, which is pretty amazing.

Syllogism requires you to clear a set amount of Trisms within a specific number of moves by sliding them into place with a tilt of your iPhone, while Terminism is a fraught race against time that sees you desperately matching Trisms before your on-screen gauge runs out. Add in the fact that all three game modes feature the ability to set your scores online and it would appear that Steve Demeter has thought of everything. Trism is quite simply one of the best puzzle games currently available on the iPhone. It's simple and accessible and yet you'll be unable to put it down once you've picked it up. Just like all good games should be.

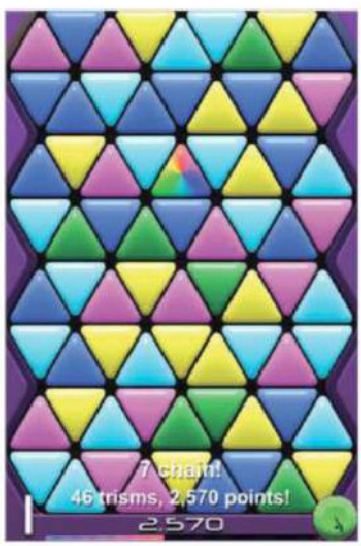
Rating ★★★★★



Screwed sections stop you from sliding, which gets very frustrating.



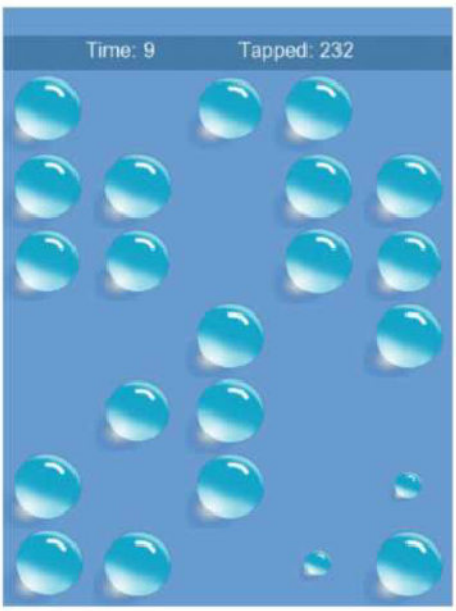
You only have a few moves to get rid of bombs, so be sure to get rid of them as quickly as possible.



Build up your chain of Trisms to increase your score in this rather addictive puzzle game.

Bubble Tap for iPad

Price: Free **Developer:** rise uP! Labs



This is the extent of the graphics. Yeah, it's basic.



Pop the bubbles as quickly as you can.

Go bubble-wrap popping mad, if only for a few moments

Enjoy the cacophony brought about by bursting bubble-wrap? If so you'll love this game because that's all you do! Burst bubbles by the hundred to a countdown of 25 seconds, and you'll quickly discover that the most efficient way to reach a high score is to simply mash your fingers across the screen. Bonuses are given for bursting a bubble in under a second, so you'll find the random bashing of fingers an unbeatable method of playing.

Unfortunately there's no final score given after a session, and scores are not saved for later comparison. Why such an oversight would be made is beyond us, as it detracts from any real replay value this game might otherwise have had. This is a quite clearly a free game, and one that will be deleted shortly after a few plays. If your home is currently lacking a source of bubble-wrap, download this app to fill your appetite. It's fun for a while.

Rating ★★☆☆☆

Melodica

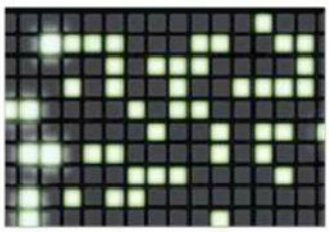
Make beautiful music with a tap of your finger

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** CandyCane LLC



Use the settings to speed up or slow down a composition.

Shake your iPhone to clear the screen and your song.





We were expecting to find this music-making application a bit of a waste of time for such a small fee but after one play we were hooked. Effectively, Melodica is a just a grid of small squares. Once you touch a square it is illuminated and at a specific time it is highlighted and plays a note. As you illuminate more squares you begin creating rhythm and chords as well as a spectacular looking light show. Settings can speed up or slow down your melodies and even save them for playback another time. Should you make a mistake or wish to start again, simply shake your phone to clear the screen. A little experimentation can lead to some great little ditties and the app provides a brilliant way to show off your iPhone. For such a small amount of money this is a brilliant app to add a great feature to your phone and one that will surely impress others and while away many a happy bus journey too. Whether you have a musical ear or not this app is bound to entertain you.

Rating ★★★★☆

iPhone & iPad | Music/Puzzle

JukeBoxChamp

Price: £0.59/$0.99 **Developer:** Stlappworks.com

The ultimate music test using your own library



You can adjust the length of the clips that play, to make it even more difficult.



Album artwork is displayed once you answer a question.



While the iPod has long had a great music game included with it and a number have appeared on the App Store, JukeBoxChamp could well be the king of them all. The difference between this app and its rivals is the customisation options that add to the game and allow for more than one player to be involved. You can also adjust the length of the clips that play in order to create a particularly tricky quick-fire game. The music is taken from your iPhone's music library so you will obviously need a decent number of tracks to enjoy the game at its best but, once you do, the game becomes a frantic flow of sonic fun. Scores are based on the speed and accuracy of your responses so you need to be on top form and have a good grasp of the songs you listen to regularly. Nice touches like album art and album names add to the fun and make for a great game to play with friends or alone.

Rating ★★★★½

Rhythm Racer

Price: Free **Developer:** AvatarLabs

For when normal racing lacks a certain rhythmic edge

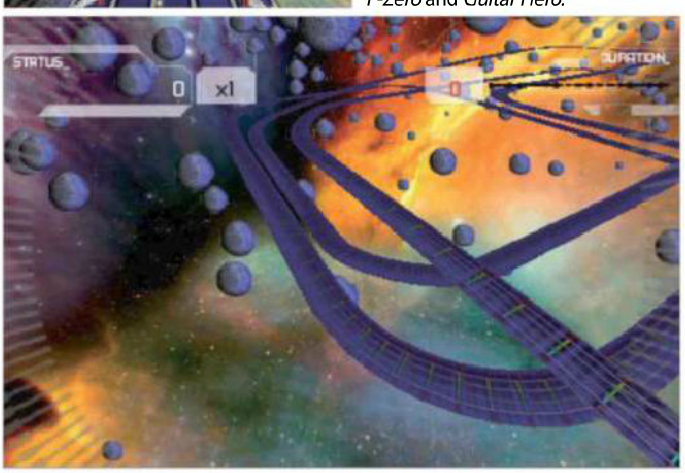


If you're both a fan of keeping rhythm and the PlayStation classic WipEout, then you may want to drop the very reasonable sum of zero pounds on Rhythm Racer. Borrowing its look more than just a tad from Sony's classic hit, the gimmick here is to hit specific blocks in order to keep the music in the background running. Miss one and the tune cuts out, taking away the thrill of racing around a space-styled track to an adrenaline-fuelled theme.

The expected tilt controls are fine, even if they do take a little while to adapt to, and the tracks are upbeat enough to make the quest to keep the song going a worthy one. But the problem is merely the lack of courses on offer. When the game's novelty value comes in its tempo, you want much more than just two options. With that said, when you don't have to pay a dime, it's hard to truly complain and it's really not all bad.

Rating ★★★½☆





Rhythm Racer almost manages to find a unique place between games like *F-Zero* and *Guitar Hero*.

Price: £4.99/$6.99 **Developer:** PopCap Games

Plants vs Zombies HD

Put the petal to the metal, it's time to kick Zombie ass



There's a certain set of games that people, trying to be helpful, will warn you away from. Not because they're bad, no – quite the opposite, actually. You'll be told to steer clear because the game in question is so highly addictive, so un-put-downable, that you could well end up losing hours, even days of your life to playing it. Chief among these over the past year has been PopCap's Plants vs Zombies, which has been a huge hit for the PC, Mac and iPhone, and now gets an HD version especially for the iPad.

The game is almost exactly the same as the iPhone version, but for good reason – the added screen real estate is the only upgrade the wonderfully honed horticultural horror really needs. Making great use of the iPad's multitouch capabilities, the game has you furiously planting various weird and wonderful defensive plants to try and prevent a horde of zombies making their way across your lawn (and later, rooftop). With a limited set available during each level, choosing the right combination of plants is crucial to making it out alive.

The early levels are brilliantly designed to gently introduce you to the gameplay, which soon becomes frantic and often challenging. Ever seen a team of bobsledding undead? You will. They'll be right behind the zombie driving an ice tractor. Pea Shooters that fire real peas (the frozen ones slow zombies down), a Squash that lives up to its name, or a magic mushroom that will have the zombies grooving out of control – they're all in there too. This is a game with a real sense of humour, and some of the most engaging gameplay we've encountered in years.



Lily pad? Why do I need a lily pad? It's questions like this that will tempt you into playing the next level. And the next, and the next…

Rating ★★★★★



Things to spot in this screenshot: zombie bobsledding team; headless zombie wearing a wetsuit and riding an inflatable shark; a rubber duck.



The night-time levels will have you planting plenty of mushrooms. They're fun guys to be around…

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Chillingo Ltd

Cut The Rope

It's always the simple ideas that make the best games



On the surface this is a seemingly simple game that is easy to dismiss. All you do is slice dangling ropes by tracing your fingertip across the screen. On the end of said rope is a sweet that you must guide into the mouth of a frog-like creature that's been abandoned on your virtual doorstep in a cardboard box.

After playing the first ten trial levels we were hooked. You see, it's not as simple as dropping the prize into the ever-hungry target, that's often the easy part. There are three stars to collect on each level, and you get them by moving the sweet around by trapping it in bubbles, linking it to other ropes, moving the ropes on sliders and so on. You really have to think before each move. Each level is represented by a different kind of box – cardboard, fabric, foil – and the battle to amass a total of 190 stars to open the elusive final 'Gift box' was one that swallowed a whole Saturday.

We've tried Cut The Rope on the iPad and iPhone. Those blessed with little fingers will cope with the small screen of the iPhone, for those with larger digits, Apple's bigger brother will be better.

Gloriously addictive, we can see why this app has held the number one slot in the App Store. We can't wait for the release of the new levels, which keep coming out regularly.

Rating ★★★★★



This little chap called Om was left on your doorstep. He has an appetite for candy that you must feed him by cutting ropes and swinging it into his mouth.



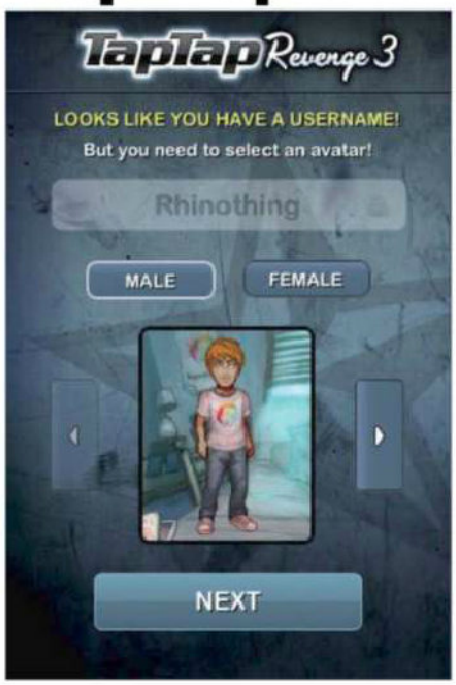
There are lots of hazards. Early ones include spikes that will make your sweets explode, ending the game.



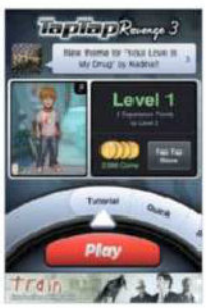
On the iPhone, the full playing area is not always displayed on one screen.

Tap Tap Revenge 3

Price: £1.49/$1.99 **Developer:** Tapulous, Inc







You can create your own avatar at the start.

Musical vengeance runs strong

Almost assuming the role of Rock Band within the iPhone's world, Tap Tap Revenge 3 is without doubt one of the finest musical-related games available on Apple's handheld device. Free to download and supplemented thanks to its own store that has an abundance of tracks to increase your experience, it finds true excellence by also enabling a host of songs to be downloaded without dropping a penny. Such presents do come with some provisos attached, usually in the form of being shortened or giving you no power over the difficulty level, but Tap Tap Revenge 3 couldn't really give much more away. We'd still plump for Metallica's own version due to musical tastes, but for those who want a far more diverse app this provides it by the truckload. If you get too obsessed you may end up spending more cash than you'd like, but that choice is in your hands…

Rating ★★★★½

Tunes Attack! for iPad

Price: £1.99/$2.99 **Developer:** Nemoid Studio

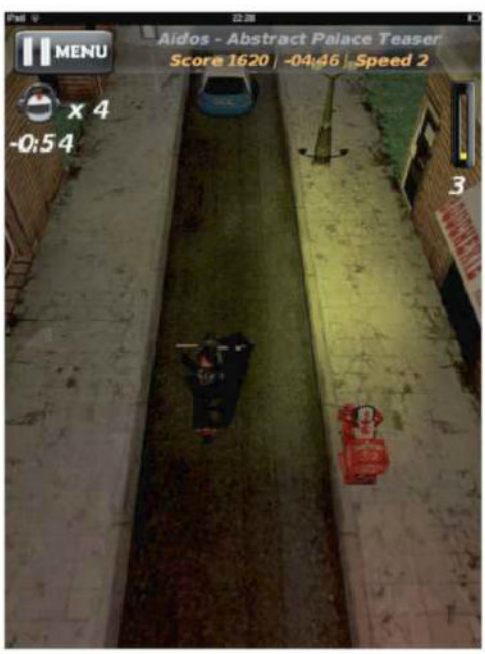
A varied and catchy music-based game, with three varied modes



This is a surprisingly fun game with plenty of originality. The basics are as follows: there are three game modes, two task you with guiding a character along a fixed path while dodging or destroying obstacles, and the third is a rhythm game where you tap the screen in time to the music. The speed of the game is determined by the beats of a music track, and you can earn extra lives by collecting or hitting certain objects. It's basically a mish-mash of Space Invaders and Tap Tap Revenge.

You'll find plenty more within the game. Comic book panels appear at the start of each track, with more appearing at the bottom of the screen as you play. The graphics are attractive and there are a number of themed levels to choose from. There are, however, only four music tracks to pick from.

Rating ★★★★½





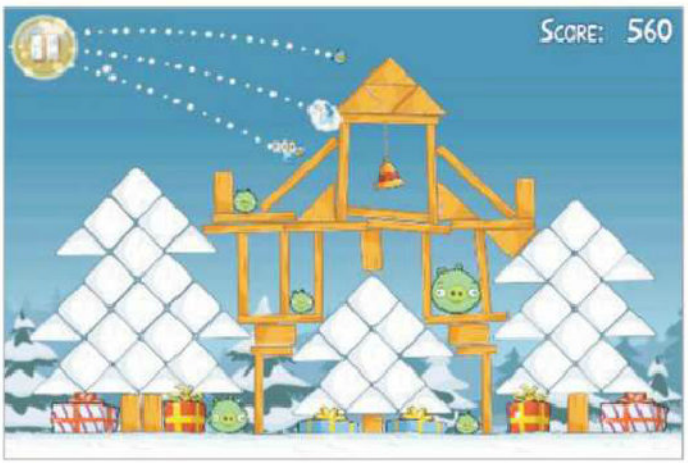
The graphics are detailed and 3D – this is one attractive game.

iPhone & iPad | Music/Puzzle

Angry Birds: Seasons

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Rovio Mobile

Because Christmas time isn't just for the office party…



Different birds offer auxiliary abilities, such as the laying of egg bombs or a diving attack.



Angry Birds represents perhaps the biggest success story in handheld development. Add a price point everyone can afford, and solid (if not exactly original) gameplay mechanics, then sit back and watch the dollars roll in. And the pounds. And the euros, etc.

This compilation remix of sorts features Halloween and Christmas-themed levels and the latter selection even added one new Angry Birds puzzle per advent day, allowing our feathered friends to continue their fight right up to present opening time and beyond. .

For those unfamiliar, Angry Birds borrows elements from just about every tank-based videogame ever produced – the player's job being to direct each bird using pretensile strength and angle to destroy a collection of pigs lying a distance away. Predictably, the porcine enemy has built itself numerous fortresses that each collapse under gravity should shots prove accurate enough.

This joyful impulse buy was as delightful and addictive as ever and keeps expanding, just like the main game.

Rating ★★★★½

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Khush Inc

LaDiDa

The dark horse of the App Store



Chances are you haven't heard of LaDiDa. First of all it has a slightly ridiculous name, and it doesn't really let you know what you can expect from downloading it. Thankfully, those that do will be in for treat. Asking you to record a song by simply singing into the iPhone's microphone, the app will then put in a backing track, adjust the pitch and add in reverb depending on the tempo and style of the song you chose. You can essentially put together a track in three minutes, and those with a more light-hearted disposition will revel in the chance to make a tune of ridiculous proportions before posting it on someone's Facebook wall or Twitter feed – both of which can be done through LaDiDa.

Oddly entertaining and bizarrely addictive, we can't recommend Khush Inc's nugget of goodness enough. It will keep you hooked for much longer than you ever thought.





As well as being able to share your own creations, you can also download other 'masterpieces'.

LaDiDa is far more addictive than it has any right to be and will have you singing its songs for some time.

Rating ★★★★★



Levels such as this, featuring a range of physical devices, elevate Crayon Physics Deluxe above its competition.

To suggest the supplied level editor is a touch complex would be an understatement. Help files please!



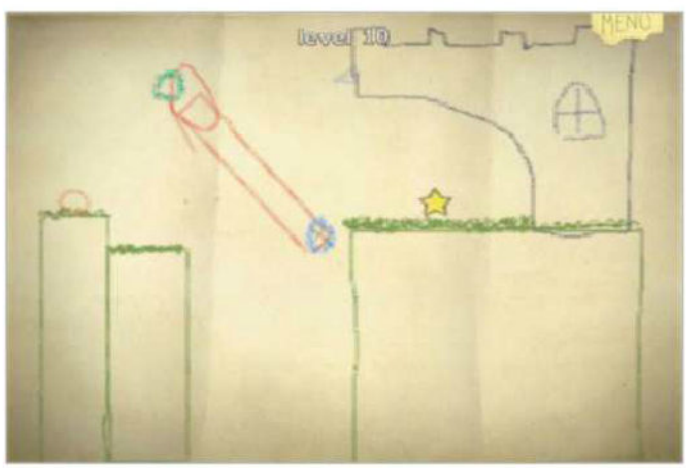
Price: £4.99/$6.99 **Developer:** Hudson Entertainment

Crayon Physics Deluxe

So much more than child's play

Crayon Physics Deluxe offers the kind of gaming experience that would have seemed woolly and indistinct before the iPhone and iPad came along. Presenting gamers with simple crumpled piece of paper, the app takes somewhat of a flight of fantasy, imagining what it would be like if doodles of various kinds on screen could come to life. Not in Scribblenauts fashion you understand – that would prove perhaps a little complex – more as a Rube Goldberg-inspired, physics-based machine. Only one made out of a few crayons and a child's spare time.

The overall goal is simple: guide the red ball-shaped outline to a small star, via a series of bumps, collisions and rudimentary swinging contraptions. Once drawn, each object will conform to the laws of physics as you'd expect it to. Anything square shaped will land on a surface and stay where it is. Anything slightly more spherical might roll on its merry way. Anything drawn onto the sheet before players have anything to do with it broadly stays as it is. Coming from a recognised videogame publisher, it's no surprise to see levels adopt traditional design tenets, gently easing players into the core concept before expanding later on.



Need to lower the drawbridge? Just draw a heavy object at its tip. Then cry as the ball disappears…

Whether it's a series of angled platforms, inviting looking hooks onto which large weights may be attached, or just advice scribbled directly onto the background, getting lost will be a matter of special talent. In addition to 50 diverse levels that will doubtless eat up a handful of disparate hours there's a useful (if poorly explained) level editor, which sadly offers no method to export your creations but nevertheless allows players to share challenges around the office or lunch table. If you're looking for a slightly more long-term gaming experience then, this offers one of the most pleasing iDevice options.

Rating ★★★★½

iPhone & iPad | Music/Puzzle

Price: £1.49/$1.99 **Developer:** BBC Worldwide Ltd

Doctor Who: The Mazes Of Time

Comic-book fun comes alive in this action-packed adventure



The story behind The Mazes Of Time is simple. The Doctor and Amy Pond answer a distress call to save the members of a family who have been warped off to different time zones that range from an Incan world to a sprawling Dalek ship.

It's a fairly simplistic story, but it does allow for a nice range of locations, even if they're aren't rendered to any great degree. But while it's not much to look at, the all-important gameplay is of a far better standard, with the Doctor and Amy having to work together to clear each area. Initially, puzzles consist of straightforward switches that must be pressed, and doorways that must be opened, but they do require more head-scratching later on.

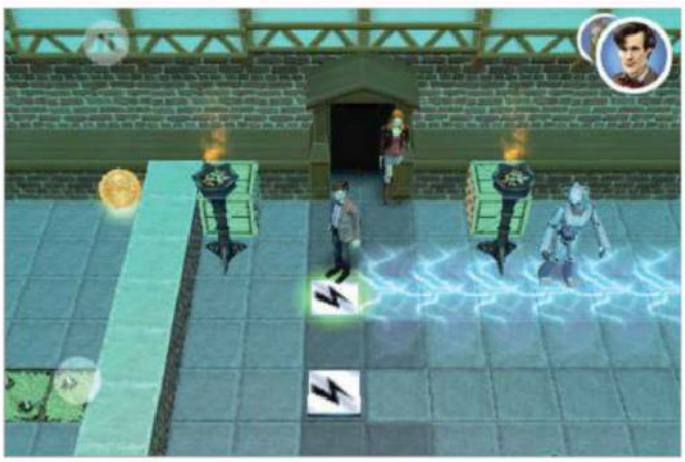
Amy and the Doctor are very different in the way they are used to solve puzzles. The light-footed Amy is able to easily move along cracked tiles and crawl under small areas, while the stronger Doctor has the ability to push large crates and clamber over high objects. You can also switch between the two characters at will, which further adds to the game's strategy.

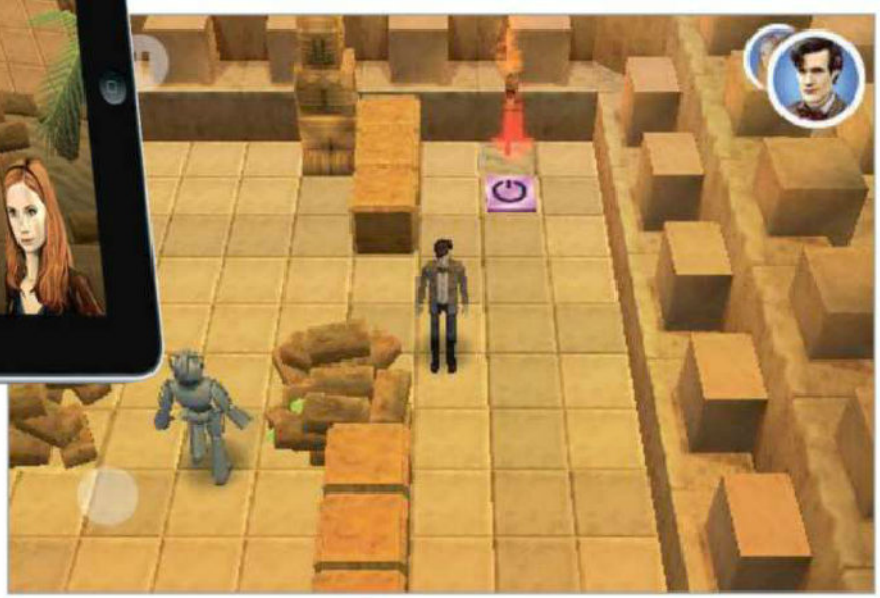
The game won't take you more than five hours to complete, but it's a highly entertaining romp, thanks to its recognisable heroes and villains, solid presentation and the fact that it's just a lot of fun to play. Yes, it's squarely aimed at kids, and yes it's a little too easy for its own good, but there is much for fanatics to love here.

Rating ★★★★★



Despite the chemistry Amy and the Doctor have in the series, they don't actually speak here. It's a shame, as some banter would have been great.





While the Doctor can die in The Mazes Of Time, he never actually regenerates.

The Incredible Machine

Price: £2.49/$3.99 **Developer:** kunst-

Can the original physics game live up to its name?



If you're not happy with the position of a puzzle, you can move and manipulate it.

This Disney game finds itself in an interesting predicament. Despite starting off the physics-based puzzle genre back in 1993, The Incredible Machine has taken a fair old bit of time to receive an iOS port, and as a result now feels like old hat compared to the rest of the app store.

On each level, you're given a specific task, ranging from capturing a cat to having to score with a basketball. You're often given several everyday items – such as shears and blocks of cheese – and each must be used in order to achieve your goal. It's a clever little system, but it's let down by the general lack of difficulty that many of the puzzles offer.

Once the 75 included puzzles are completed, there are a further 45 to attempt but, annoyingly, these take the form of in-app purchases at £0.69/$0.99 a pack. With a better game we might have swallowed it, but The Incredible Machine doesn't warrant it.

Rating ★★★★★

The Great Jitters: Pudding Panic HD

Do puddings even feel emotion?

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Taptolearn

Imagine that you were a jelly riding a seemingly endless ghost train. What one emotion do you think you'd feel the most? Well, probably none – because food substances don't have feelings.

That's besides the point, as Pudding Panic HD, despite the name, is actually a cleverly hidden puzzle game. As the eponymous pudding rides the rails – his objective being simply to locate the exit without being literally scared to death – your only input is to place track parts at specific locations to alter his path, avoid the beasties, and ride to safety. Many of these puzzles require fast actions, altering the tracks as quickly as possible to ensure paths don't cross with enemies. Others task you with leading enemies into each other so that their distinct abilities are wasted against each other.

Our only complaint is that the majority of the courses can be navigated in no time. For the price we'd expect a bit more content, or at least a little more replayability. Nonetheless, Pudding Panic is an enjoyable puzzler with an interesting concept.



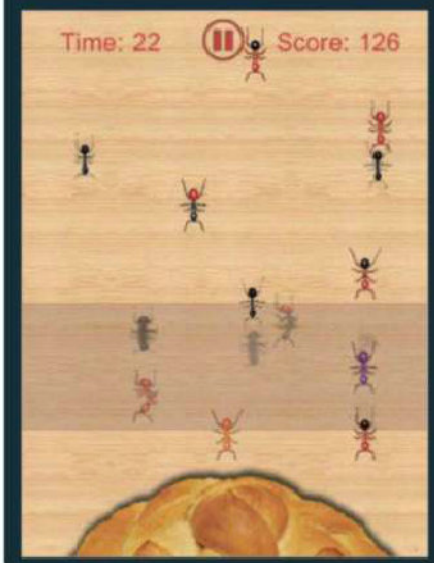
Though there are four different worlds, the visual variety is lacking.

Rating ★★★★★

Tap Tap Ants

Price: Free **Developer:** rise uP! Labs

Cruelty against ants, or a new take on the rhythm-action genre?



Ants attack the pie. You crush the ants to save the pie. And who says iPhone apps aren't credible?

On occasion, *Tap Tap Ants* can become quite frantic – to where it can be a little frustrating.





To those going through this bookazine with a fine-tooth comb, you will have read elsewhere how important it is to take the touch rhythm-action mechanic and find a way to spice it up a bit. If you're the people working at rise uP! Labs, this comes in the form of ants. As the fiends try and advance upon your pie placed at the bottom of the screen, you have to crush the minions into the ground in time with a selected song.

Although this isn't instantly apparent – at first it will seem like you're just crushing ants for the sake of it – those who manage to start eliminating ants in the order they cross the 'tap line' will notice the rhythm they're providing. It can be a little fiddly at times due to the amount of bugs that attack you at once, but all-in-all this is a unique app that does enough to feel different – even if it is a little crazy.

Rating ★★★★★

iBall3D

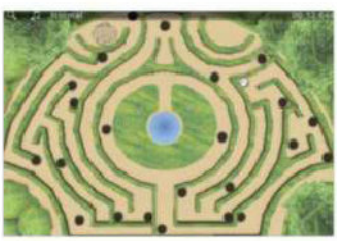
Price: Free **Developer:** StoneTrip

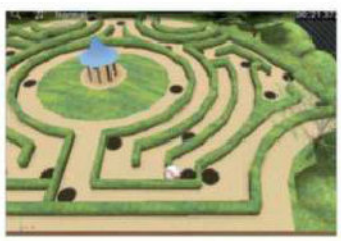
This app requires a steady hand and nerves of steel



iBall3D is extremely tough; it's basically a remake of the *Labyrinth* game but in 3D. You can still use the classic overhead view, or zoom in to play in 3D style, though. The levels are extremely hard (for us, anyway!) and we did experience a tiny bit of lag in the game, which did detract from gameplay experience. However, we doubt that will affect all users. The levels are nicely made and offer original takes on what could have been a very boring game. It's well worth a download, especially since it won't set you back anything. It's another great game for passing a few minutes when queuing for stamps at the Post Office. We especially like the addition of a timer so you can try to beat your own score, or challenge others to do so. Be prepared for frustration, however, as the levels get tougher and tougher, and you'll see your ball disappear through countless holes rather a lot. If you can stand up to that kind of disappointment then there's plenty to enjoy about this game though.

Rating ★★★★★







iBall 3D will be a tough little game for all but avid gamers, but the design is really great.



Hidden within the levels are items of fruit. You are awarded special bonuses if you manage to collect them.



Getting a three-star award is extremely hard to manage in later stages, but also highly satisfying when you finally do so.



The story for Angry Birds Rio is charmingly told via large simple cartoon panels.

Price: £1.99/$2.99 **Developer:** Rovio Mobile

Angry Birds: Rio

Pigs rejoice – the birds are back, but this time they vent their anger on the rest of the animal kingdom



Angry Birds is arguably the most successful iOS game of all time, with millions of downloads and gameplay that delights and infuriates in equal measure.

With developers Rovio getting more and more outspoken about how it and other developers are paving the way for the future of gaming, Angry Birds Rio proves itself to be a slight disappointment, as it's not progressive in any shape or form.

Based on the recently released children's animated film Rio, Angry Birds Rio makes a few graphical changes here and there, but is effectively the same great game that we all know and love. The rival pigs are nowhere to be seen in Angry Birds Rio. Instead, the player must fling birds in order to free parrots and other birds that have been caged and captured.

This is achieved in exactly the same way as the original game: you're presented with a fiendishly designed layout, and must use your limited number of birds to destroy said construction, and free all the birds that are present. Run out of birds, and you'll need to restart the level. The second episode deviates slightly by having you destroying monkeys (standing in for the usual pigs), but the overall aim remains the same: clear the stage in order to continue.

So far, so Angry Birds, but Rovio have introduced a number of new gameplay mechanics that while relatively simple, still make a big difference on how you approach certain stages. The most noteworthy introduction in Angry Birds Rio are new objects like chains and lights, which are found throughout the first episode's warehouse stages.

The second episode features plenty of dense foliage that can be quite tricky to break through, so again a surprising amount of planning is needed in order to ensure that you always have the best bird to tackle each area of a stage.

It's something off a pity then that Angry Birds Rio doesn't introduce any new birds to play around with, which when you consider the feathery content of the film, seems like something of a missed opportunity.

Of course, you could argue that the feathered critters that were introduced in the original game are perfect anyway, and admittedly there's no denying that the gameplay itself is as fun as ever, but when you see how well the macaws are implemented, you'll be wishing that Rovio had introduced some more innovative play mechanics and developed its setting a little more.

Rating ★★★★½

Touch Physics

Draw your way to victory

Price: £1.49/$1.99 **Developer:** Mark D Simpson



Although Touch Physics was beaten to the digital punch by Crayon Physics Deluxe, it's a far more polished product. Concept wise they are virtually identical: a star appears on screen and you must draw a variety of different objects to guide your wheel to it. Initially you'll need to do nothing more than draw a massive circle to knock your wheel into motion. As the levels progress, though, you'll have to draw a variety of squares, planks and circles to reach those pesky stars and battle against *Touch Physics*' clever gravity. Unlike Hudson's effort, however, the inability to draw ever more complex shapes and objects actually works in Touch Physics' favour, because you have to simply work with the few limited shapes that are available to you. Add in 50 different levels to play your way through – some of which really are incredibly devious – and its charming crayon-styled visuals and Touch Physics easily justifies its inexpensive price tag. This is a fun game that will see you hooked to making it to the next stage and drawing your way to iPhone fun.



Gravity is your friend here. Later tasks are far harder, though.

Then double tap an object to get rid of it.



Rating ★★★★★

Super Monkey Ball

Price: £1.99/$2.99 **Developer:** Sega America

When tilting goes bad, the Monkey Balls will fly



Man, imagine how happy the iPhone world was when Sega announced that its popular platformer Super Monkey Ball was coming to the device. With its built-in accelerometer, guiding the sphere down a slippery slope should've been an absolute dream. Instead, it's an aggravating mess. Monkey Ball's biggest problem is how inconsistent it is when it comes to response time. On occasion only the slightest movement will send the ball flying off in the opposite direction whereas others you'll have to shake the iPhone like your life depends on it to even move an inch. While this is fine on the earlier levels, and even a little satisfying, when it's time to truly test your skills it's almost impossible to progress. If you have the patience of a saint and can find a way around Monkey Ball's foibles you'll be able to get some enjoyment out of it but we'd highly suggest not even bothering. Unless, that is, you like being enraged.

Rating ★★☆☆☆



Considering the levels are as fiendishly difficult as ever, the poor controls are not exactly conducive to a peaceful life.

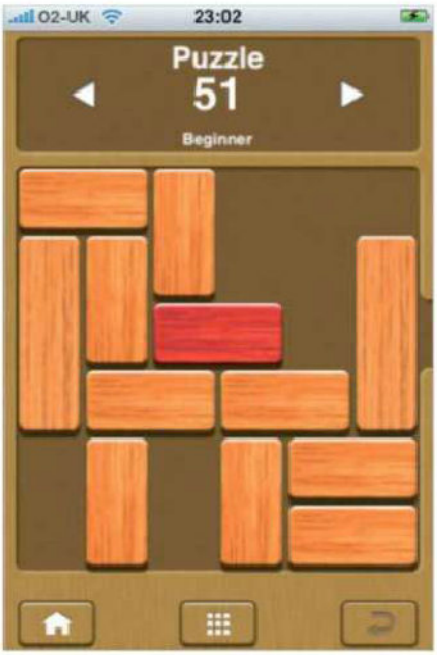




Unblock Me

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Kirakorn Chimkool

Basic gaming that rewards your frustration



If you're able to get to the latter stages of Unblock Me, be prepared to start ripping your hair out.



Completely uninspiring from a visual angle, Unblock Me's skill comes in how well it drags you in.



Much like Toobz, Unblock Me is also based on an old concept. For some reason (that's never explained) a red piece of wood has become trapped within a pool of brown ones and needs to be freed from captivity. To remove it, however, is not as easy as picking it up and going on your merry way. Achieving your goal has to be completed by following a strict set of rules: every object can be shifted in the direction it's facing but can never go through another obstacle. The key, then, is to continually move each piece of wood until gaps start to appear. Follow the right pattern and you'll create a hole that's big enough to extract your target before moving on to the next puzzle.

Unblock Me can get frightfully hard, but it's so apt at getting inside your head that it's near impossible to put down. Basic gaming done fabulously well like this is always a joy to behold and this is one of the best examples on the App Store of a simple idea executed as close to perfection as you'll find.

Rating ★★★★½

Zen Bound

Price: £1.99/$2.99 **Developer:** Secret Exit Ltd

A different kind of iPhone game



This game is odd and yet brilliant. The idea is that you have an object in the centre of the screen that you can manipulate using a drag of the finger (it will swivel in all three dimensions) and then attached to it is a rope that you must wind around the object until you've covered a significant proportion, by which point the game is won. You can best your score by doing the wrapping more efficiently using a lesser length of rope, or by covering a greater percentage of the object than the last time. It's one of those games that's hard to explain, but enthralling to play.

The reason it translates so much better in the playing is that the control you have over the object is astounding; the physics involved in the way the rope behaves is mind melting. We really haven't seen another app that can compete with this for great gameplay and polished design.

Rating ★★★★★







This uses mellow music and calm gameplay to encourage logical moves.

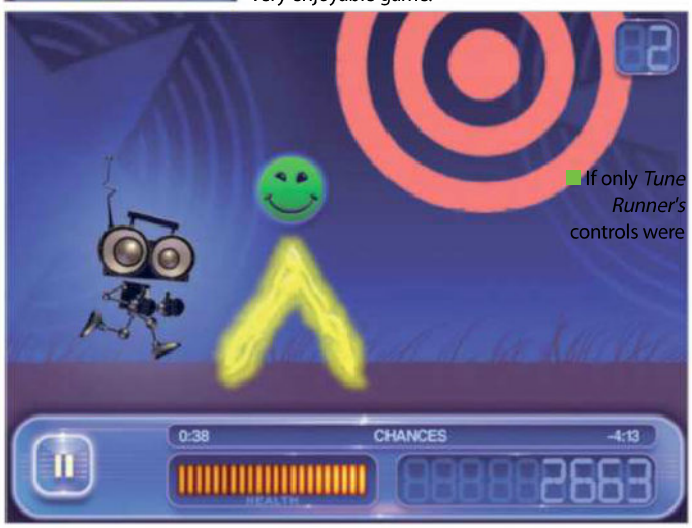
Tune Runner HD

Price: £1.49/$2.99 **Developer:** Appy Entertainment, Inc

An addictive, lively and fun music-drawing game



Stodgy controls ruin what could have been an otherwise very enjoyable game.



If only *Tune Runner's* controls were

The basics are as follows: a character called Groov-EE dances to the left of the screen, letters and shapes slide in from the right, and the player has to draw these shapes and numbers before they reach Groov-EE. Accuracy and timing are key to reaching a high score. Mess up and poor Groov-EE falters mid-dance.

The game detects the music library on your device and generates tracks on-the-fly. This means you can play using your song of choice, making the game a totally unique experience for each player. It also includes a number of popular tracks that have high top scores from other players. If you don't own one of these tracks then the game offers a link to buy it from the iTunes Store. Tune Runner HD uses the OpenFeint gaming system, so if you have an account you can upload your scores and compare to others. In all, this is an incredibly fun and polished music game that has a lot to commend it, but there are just a lot of better music games out there for you to discover.

Rating ★★★½☆

TonePad

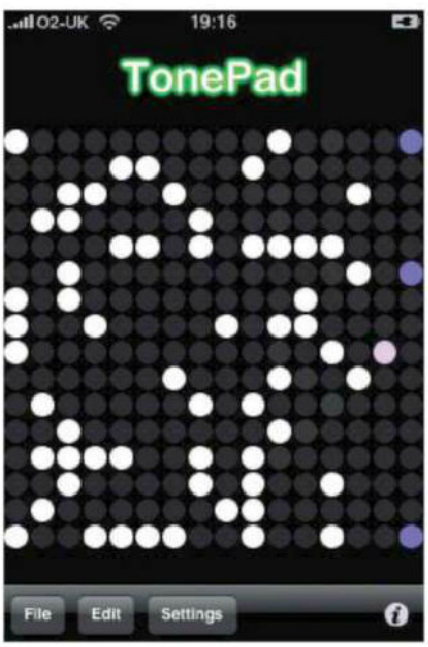
Price: Free **Developer:** LoftLab

A simple, odd and compelling little music maker

It's hard to really explain what TonePad is without it sounding horrendously dull. Push one of the individual dots on the screen and a sound will start to play. Touch another, and the new beat will match itself in time with the previous one. Before long, you have a chain of notes ringing out to create music, which can be as charming as it is easy to construct.

For some, the appeal will end here, but those who have a creative flair may find themselves sucked in. Give it enough time to learn how it all comes together and it's perfectly possible to piece together a song you had in your head. With the ability to save it and then share your creation with friends, TonePad could be seen as an inexpensive creation tool. It may lack options, but for what it is the potential is most certainly there. It's an interesting addition to any iPhone and one that you'll come back to again and again.

Rating ★★★½☆



As strange as it sounds, writing out words can often provide you with a song.

Watching as all the dots come together as one to form a song has a certain thrill about it.



Price: £1.99/$2.99 Developer: Activision Publishing, Inc

Guitar Hero

Fun enough, but no rock star

Guitar Hero is the original strummer, the game that first gave gamers the taste of what it feels like to rock out in front of a whooping crowd and thrash out some of rock music's finest moments. The best thing about the iPhone version is the intuitive strumming and sliding control method.

You can swipe your finger in a certain direction to strum and slide it over a set number of linked notes to perfect a very satisfying, free-flowing playing style. It feels great, but sadly this app falls straight off the stage in other areas. There are no multiplayer modes and only six songs are available for free. On the other hand seeing as this game is half the price of Rock Band, it serves its purpose as being a deeply satisfying rock-out app. Long hair is optional.



Rating ★★★½☆

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

Tetris

You can't keep the old dog down

Tetris, quite simply, is timeless. Regardless of how many years pass and what other ideas are stumbled upon, Alexey Pajitnov's puzzler will be just as good in 30 years as it has been for over two decades. As you would expect, Tetris on the iPhone ensures this remains true, despite not being the best adaptation. Controlling the blocks as they fall to their doom can be a little fiddly but the new modes – which all couldn't work on any other contraption – are a great fit for the legendary franchise.



Even the standard mode would've sufficed but the new additions will

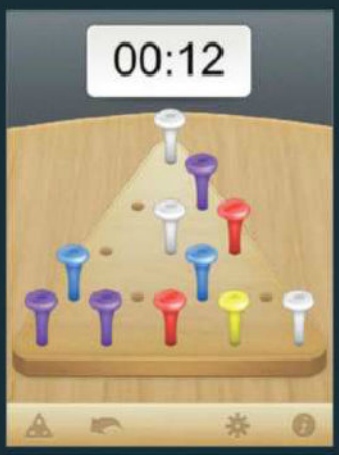
Rating ★★★½☆

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Catnip Media

Peg Genius HD

The simple game that has puzzled for years

Peg Genius cuts straight to the chase. Launching the game takes you straight to the peg board where you're asked to remove a peg to start. Your next move is to jump one peg over another and into the empty hole. The peg you've jumped gets removed and you keep jumping until there's only one peg left. It sounds simple, and is, but it soon gets fiendishly hard. That's all there is to the game, and that's all there needs to be. Simple genius.



This classic puzzle game proves that sometimes all you need is a bunch of pegs and holes.

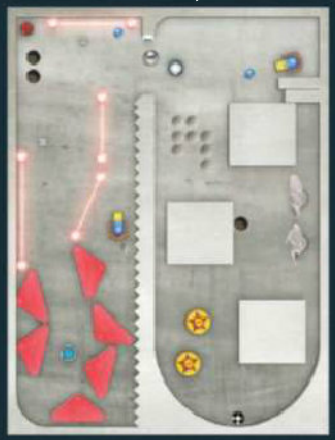
Rating ★★★★★

Price: £5.49/$7.99 Developer: Illusion Labs AB

Labyrinth 2 HD

Stunning visuals and frustrating gameplay

When Labyrinth arrived on the iPhone it quickly joined the group of apps that almost everyone installed. This was partly down to the gameplay, but mostly down to the stunning three-dimensional effects and physics that make it feel as if you're holding the real thing. On the iPad this magic is even more impressive, especially when vibrations from the speaker mean you feel the ball hit the wood. If you're looking for a game to show off your new iPad, this is it.



It was great on the iPhone, it's stunning on the iPad. A game every iPad owner should have.

Rating ★★★★★

Racing



Games rarely get as competitive as the head to head action you'll find in racing titles and that's why we come back to them again and again. Whether it's a lap time or a friend, we won't be beaten on the track.

Top Paid Apps	Top Free Apps
Real Racing HD ★★★★★	High Noon ★★★★★
DrawRace ★★★★	Falling Fred ★★★★½
Need For Speed Hot Pursuit for iPad ★★★★½	Ridge Racer Accelerated HD ★★★½☆

Staff pick of the section

Fast Five ★★★★½	Death Rally ★★★★½



Races quickly become frantic battles to blast each other apart.

Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Remedy Entertainment LtdSystems, Inc

Death Rally

A remake of a classic shoot-up-up racer



Developed by Remedy Entertainment, Death Rally is a modern re-make of the company's first ever title, originally released in 1996.

It tasks you with controlling a gun-toting car from a top-down view. Vehicles come with two weapons, the first a standard machine gun, and the second an optional upgrade with weapons that include shotguns, a rocket launcher and a Gatling gun. Controls take the form of two virtual sticks, one for steering, and the other for firing your weapons. It's not possible to control the acceleration, nor can you reverse it, but it's not an issue due to the arcade-heavy gameplay. Five tracks are included, which can be played in mirror and reverse modes, adding to the variety. The game focuses heavily on upgrading your car with extra speed, better handling, extra armour and of course, weapons. You gain upgrade points by winning races and blasting apart fellow drivers, so the game soon becomes an addictive race to upgrade cars to cause evermore destruction.

This really is one of the most polished racers in the App Store, and with more content promised in future updates, is certainly worth a download and your time.

Rating ★★★★½

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Fish Labs

Rally Master Pro 3D

Enjoy a nice drive in the countryside, by ploughing your car through it



The countryside. A green and pleasant oasis in a hectic world some might say, but probably not those who like speeding metal around muddy hairpins and along bone-shattering dirt tracks. We refer, of course, to the most back-to-nature driving experience of all – the rally. The first question you'll want answering is this: time trial or head-to-head race? Rally diehards rejoice because it's all against the clock, but that doesn't lessen the excitement because each leg of the rally has time checkpoints that flag how far behind you are. There are three rallies – starting with Amateur, then Pro and finally Expert – each needing to be completed in turn to unlock the next. However, even Amateur is both hard and totally unforgiving. There is almost no opportunity to catch up except by perfect driving, and should you run into a wall or commit any kind of serious mistake then you can scrub that leg and get ready for a re-run. That at least helps salve the pain of losing the medal position on the final leg of the nine stages. If you made a right mess of it, the stage can be restarted.

Control-wise, there's the accelerometer-only steering, which is akin to piloting a barge; the analogue wheel, which is accurate but requires practice and small fingers; and a more traditional digital left-right option. The latter two are touch-screen operated.

After a few rounds of driving the car into a hedge/fence/rock wall, it starts to look like the forgotten rust-bucket at the back of a dodgy second-hand dealer car lot. The damage can be fixed automatically, though obviously not to showroom standard, or you can have a go yourself back in the garage.

There are Time Trial and Adrenaline race options, but again, only once the rallies in Career mode have been completed. Graphically it all looks very nice, and while fairly flat to start with it soon starts to incorporate hills and mountains, narrow bridges, tunnels and canyons. The weather also changes as the game progresses as well. There's even a co-pilot giving driving instructions, which are repeated on-screen. So, it's tough, but rewards practice and skill and is a great game to showcase the iPhone's abilities.

Rating ★★★★★



The choice of controls is yours, from accelerometer to digital finger pressing.



Your car will need fixing, either by your crew or by you.



You can watch how you terrified the local wildlife on a playback.

Price: £8.99/$12.99 9 Developer: 2K Games

Civilization Revolution for iPad

Everybody wants to rule the world



How do you fancy taking over the word today? Fine, now you just have to decide how you're going to go about it. Are you an inspirational ruler, encouraging the arts, philosophy and science? Or perhaps you prefer to rule by the sword, conquering your way across the continents of the globe? However you chose to enforce your global rule, Civilization Revolution is an immersive game of strategy, history and cunning.

With over 16 civilisations to chose from, your role is to lead your people through history, the present day and beyond, to ultimate victory and world domination. If you've never played a Civilization game before (they've been around for over 20 years) then you can start of at the easiest 'Chieftain' level, which introduces you to the game with a rather patchy tutorial. You're going to need to figure everything else out yourself, so best pay attention to what little help you do get. The interface has been completely overhauled for touch control and for the direct control of your units it's pretty intuitive. Delve further into the options menus for managing your city and people, however, and it all becomes pretty confusing. When bringing games with this staggering level of complexity to the iPad, developers need to remember that it doesn't come with a 50 page printed manual. In-game help is sparse, and newcomers are going to need to invest a great deal of time in learning the ropes of this dense game.

There's no disputing that, learning curve aside, this has to be one of the most professionally put together games on the App Store, which should come as no surprise considering its heritage. Putting the control firmly in your hands, this lets you completely customise the world and game settings. You can play for hours, days or months (and you probably will too) but you should never have to play the same level twice. This is a wonderfully complex and challenging game that comes highly recommended indeed.

Rating ★★★★★



Build up your troops and send them out to meet-'n'-greet/rampage (delete as appropriate).



The female leaders, while stylishly illustrated, all share a consistent and not always historically accurate theme.



Exploring the world around you soon opens up opportunities to revoke a diplomatic immunity or two.

Price: Free **Developer:** Namco Networks America

Ridge Racer Accelerated HD

Nought to £6 in thirty seconds…



Nothing in life is free. We've not spent our collective years on Earth without learning that one hard and fast rule, and yet even still, no-one likes feeling tricked. Disheartening it was to boot up Ridge Racer Accelerated HD for the first time, only to learn that to get any amount of content, you first need the £5.49/$8.99 unlock fee. Do so, and the game's 50 vehicles and 12 tracks will become available across the varying new modes. Initially this will overwhelm, giving plenty of choices where previously there were none. However, without a central arc of progression, the content feels lacklustre – as though you've been handed a sandbox but no bucket. You're free to play with the grains, but without the proper tools it feels wasted.





Drifting is the name of the game, adding to your banks of nitrous.

Rating ★★★½☆

Price: £1.49/$1.99 **Developer:** Sega America

Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing

Take a high-speed trip through Sega's golden years



There are tons of characters to choose from and plenty more to unlock.



As a faithful representation of the full home console version, this app is further proof that game developers are creating bigger and better games on the iOS format all the time. In terms of content, aesthetics and quality, this is a highly polished effort, with neat handling and a slew of excellent unlockable content that will always keep you coming back for more.

Sega fans will be in their element here, as all of the racers are derived from the company's most treasured licenses. From Sonic himself, to lesser known stars such as Shenmue's Ryo Hazuki and Beat from Jet Set Radio, there's fan service galore.

Each track is taken from a Sega game too, and all of them are colourful and well designed. The only issue with this game is that the handling never feels very precise, thanks to a reliance on tilt steering. It takes a while to get used to the sensitivity of turns and the automatic acceleration wrenches some control out of your hands, which is frustrating.

Rating ★★★★½







Trucks and Skulls is basically Angry Birds with different trappings, and not quite as good.

Price: Free **Developer:** App Entertainment, Inc

Trucks And Skulls NITRO

Move over Angry Birds



Fans of Angry Birds are going to adore Trucks And Skulls, primarily because it's effectively the same game. The various birdies and pigs have been replaced by different vehicles and skulls and its charming gameplay and cheap price point makes it worth playing. Each level features a cleverly stacked structure with strategically placed skulls, and you have a limited number of different vehicles that you must fling at the increasingly outlandish towers.

Sadly for Appy Entertainment, while it does a very good job of capturing the essence of Angry Birds, a number of little niggles stops it from eclipsing Rovio's fantastic little game. The most annoying aspect is launching vehicles, as the system used is rather fiddly and twitchy, making it quite difficult to redraw lines like you can in Angry Birds. Another issue is the rather floaty physics, which mean that you can't always predict how stuff will topple. Finally, it's rather easy, meaning you can go through it in a single afternoon.

Rating ★★★½☆





Now try to pull a few of the six stunt moves while you're at it.

The accelerometer can be tricky, leading to crashing a lot.

Price: £2.99/$3.99 **Developer:** 2XL Games, Inc

2XL ATV Off Road

Pulling off stunts on your ATV has never looked so good



Rallying in cars is one thing, but doing it on quad bikes or ATVs is a recipe for a trip to the hospital. Luckily, there's nothing more than your game-playing pride to hurt in this feature-rich racer. This is fast and furious with excellent graphics and well balanced gameplay that starts with easy opposition before ramping the difficulty level up. The game is all about throttle, brake and tilt controls. The display is from behind the rider and there are six stunt types that can be pulled while in the air. Memorise what they are, otherwise it will be face-in-the-dirt time. The ATVs race round the track, unlocking further races or garnering points. This action-packed game really looks the business.

Rating ★★★★½

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Gameloft S.A.

Fast Five

Fast, furious and packed full of high octane mayhem



Drawing heavily from the mechanics of its Asphalt racing titles, Gameloft's tie-in for Fast Five is a hefty title that delivers more content than its small asking price would initially suggest.

Fast Five is purely a racing game, so all of the on-foot action and shooting from the movies is nowhere to be seen. On-foot shooting sections would have certainly mixed up each chapter, as they are essentially all just a string of similar race types that quickly become a tad too familiar after only a few events.

Each chapter is unlocked after O'Conner acquires enough 'Fame Points', which are awarded by placing in the top three positions in each event. Anyone who has played an Asphalt game before will be familiar with how the game handles, with automatic acceleration, tapping the bottom of the screen to brake and tilting to steer. It works well in Asphalt, and it works well again here.

You can also unleash a nitro burst by tapping the icon on the left for a speed boost, or to give yourself more ramming power for taking out other drivers. Rewind power-ups can be used up to three times in most races, letting you undo misjudged turns or devastating crashes. The rewind skill is helpful given how perilous some tracks can be.

One track sees racers screaming around sharp turns at a dockyard and barrelling a down a long straight underneath a set of cranes. At the first lap the cranes explode, spilling girders down onto the road, requiring a great deal of weaving, or if you're unlucky enough to get smashed up, a simple tap of the rewind skill to try the stretch again.

These explosive moments of destruction are unexpected the first time around the course, and can send the pack into disarray without warning. You can also turn sharply into other racers to slam them into walls, sending them flying in a hail of debris. The crash effects are neat, but actually forcing an opponent into a wall requires almost a 90-degree turn on your part, meaning that if you miss, you'll either slam head-first into the wall behind them and take yourself out, or slow to a halt and risk losing the race.

Drifting, however, isn't so forgiving. Tapping the brake lightly while turning is supposed to result in a drift that rewards you with bonus cash at the end of each race. However, it tightens your turning arc so severely that cornering effectively become a real pain. Drift events that demand you slide round bends as often as you can quickly become an irritating slog as a result, and may have you reaching for the quit icon fast.

These minor issues aside, there is a lot to enjoy here, no less the sharp HD visuals, pounding dance soundtrack and lengthy campaign. More event types and diverse chapter missions would have been a sweetener, but as it stands, the available races are just about fun enough.

There's also a range of multiplayer modes available for you to play with friends in a private match, or with the rest of the online ranks competitively. Online races can be conducted via Bluetooth, Wi-Fi or across the web by syncing your Gameloft Live! account.

Fast Five is a huge game at a modest asking price, and while the controls may feel slack and erratic at the outset, practicing to get a feel for the tilt sensitivity is to be advised. That aside, this is another solid racing title from Gameloft.

Rating ★★★★★



Seedster: Drag races demand that you focus on both gear shifts and avoiding hazards in tandem



Hazardous: You can't see it here, but although shortcuts like the train bridge shave seconds off your lap, you have to watch out for passing trains too.

Price: £5.99/$8.99 **Developer:** Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

Need For Speed Hot Pursuit for iPad

The law: if you can't beat 'em, join 'em…



Like its home console counterpart, this iPad offering gives the player control over police missions in a series that has spent over a decade concentrating on how different a Ford Focus looks with and without neon lights. The result is a relatively truncated yet perfectly enjoyable racer, though one altogether more divorced from reality than even its rollercoaster of a relation.

Naturally, the technology jump has necessitated a trim or two. Gone is the world map, replaced with a somewhat threadbare array of tubular tracks set within generic geographical climates (perhaps a benefit, given the home version's tunnels that began in a blizzard and finished arid). Significantly altered, too, is much of the weaponry that made its full-price releaseon consoles equal parts Police Camera Action and Mario Kart.

Borrowing tilt-to-steer mechanics from almost every iOS racer ever made, Hot Pursuit's handling discards adulation of recent OutRun titles for that of Ridge Racer's drift and grip dichotomy. Success, relies largely upon sticking diligently to the racing line, more aggressive twisting motions leading to oversteer, followed by swift death. This being the case, Hot Pursuit for iPad would perhaps constitute one of the App Store's finest racing simulations if not robbed of its assortment of power-ups. With loftier ambitions, it's merely entertaining.

Rating ★★★★★





Boosting proves entirely necessary; as races descend into a trail rather than a chase, otherwise.



Racing environments are broadly as diverse as its console counterpart.



Perps can be brought to justice with just a few sturdy rams to begin with.

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Occamy Games

Moto X Mayhem

As much mayhem as you can actually have scrolling sideways



Careful use of the accelerometer is required to keep your rider in the saddle.



Two different approaches to making exactly the same game, with Moto X Mayhem here and Motocross Pro Rider. The differences are that the animation is a class above with Mayhem, there's more sound effects and the gameplay is a touch more sophisticated. The basics are the same – sideways scrolling terrain, complete to unlock the next one – but there are crucial differences. For one thing, you can start at the first stage of any of three levels here, rather than just the first. Second, the controls of accelerate, brake and tilt require more subtlety and, the because of that, the maps need to be memorised in places. It's no good going flat-out all the time or accidents will happen, but equally there are crevasses and traps that need full speed to avoid so a careful balance needs to be struck. One thing that could have been better is the choice of controls. You have to use the accelerometer to control the tilting of the rider and bike, and this is fairly tricky at times. So, better than Motocross Pro Rider, but not overly thrilling either.

Rating ★★★½☆

Price: £1.99/$2.99 **Developer:** RedLynx Ltd

Monster Trucks Nitro 2

Admire the environment, then destroy it in a monster truck



While in the air, try to pull off flips for a nitro boost.





It isn't often that you can liken a Japanese TV programme to a sideways-scrolling monster truck game, but while racing the green shadow car over chaotic scenery, the obstacle course with the wrecking ball from Takeshi's Castle comes to mind. Monster Trucks Nitro 2 takes the well worn and quite tedious premise of sideways-scrolling scenery with automatic acceleration and some obstacles to get over and turns it into a carnage-strewn, gravity-defying race against time. The aim of the game is to rotate the truck to get maximum lift on jumps and flips where possible to gain nitro boosts, and get the tyres back on the ground to keep the speed up – as shown by the green shadow car. Best of all, the trucks are a shiny 3D, and the chaos caused during the race is a visual feast.

Rating ★★★★☆

Price: £2.99/$3.9 Developer: Gameloft S. A

Shrek Kart

Don't be a kind and courteous driver, be an ogre



Check out the characters and their karts. Each one has unique characteristics and powers. I want to be Donkey!



Look, there's no way around this, no way it can't be said, but Shrek Kart is a kart game in the style of a certain plumber. You know who I mean. That's no bad thing, of course, because it ensures oodles of options, lively graphics, power ups a plenty and all your favourite characters from the films. That is, in fact, the starting point, because rather than just selecting a kart with its own unique characteristics and plonking Shrek into it, each of the 10+ karts has its own style and associated drive. If you want to drive as Fiona or Donkey, here's your chance this side of a fancy dress shop. There's plenty to tackle in single player mode with one-off races, tournaments around the various locations from the films, challenges and arena modes. If you get bored with that then there's Wi-Fi (six players) and Bluetooth (two players) connectivity for head-to-head races. Not cheap, but considerably more attractive than the green hero himself.

Rating ★★★★½

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Atod AB

Fastlane Street Racing

Weave through the traffic on winding city routes

Race the road ragged with this super high-speed game…



There are so many racing games available for the iPhone that it's difficult to choose between most of them. What Fastlane has in its locker is a very cool look and feel and some great gameplay.

From the outset this looks slick and polished. Once you've negotiated through the menus and selected the game mode (from five options) and car of your choice (from ten), you have to finish each course in a high enough position to unlock the next one. It's a typical arcade-style structure.

Driving is a matter of using the accelerator button on the right or the brake on the left and then using a tilting action to steer left and right. Graphically, the game impresses and the courses are a mixture of race circuits and winding city routes. Available at a bargain price, this is one of the best racing games on the iPhone, setting the benchmark even higher for apps to come.



Rating ★★★★½

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** RedLynx Ltd

DrawRace

RedLynx shows you what a real racing line is



One of the things that most impresses us with the iPhone is how app developers seem to be constantly thinking out of the box in order to create truly memorable gaming experiences. When we come across titles like DrawRace, we quickly come to the conclusion that the iPhone really doesn't need any extra buttons for gaming as much as some may have insisted it did back in the day.

On first glance it appears to be a clone of Super Sprint, Super Cars, Micro Machines or any other top-down-view racer that you could care to mention. But as soon as you start playing, you realise that RedLynx's game is nothing like its peers.

Instead of tilting your iPhone to steer around the 20 perfectly crafted tracks, you instead simply draw the route you wish your vehicle to take. Once your laps have been drawn, your car will then follow the racing line (ho ho) to the letter and you must reach the finish before your opponent does.

The beauty here, however, is that the speed of which you draw your line and the way you draw it also affects your car's handling and momentum. So while anyone can potentially pick up and play it, it's going to take a lot of practice in order to truly master it.

Even once you've caned every single available track, DrawRace's excellent additional modes ensure that there are plenty of reasons to keep returning to it, as once a track is beaten you'll be given new options when returning to it.

Time Trial is a simple race against the clock and allows you to upload and compare your time with other people online, while there's also an option to simply race against a ghost of your best race, and even compete against opponents online. There's also a national network league to take part in. Play locally, on the other hand, and you'll have support for up to two other players. Comprehensive stuff.

If we wanted to moan about DrawRace we'd argue that its 20 tracks make it a little short. Besides that, it's pretty much perfect.

Rating ★★★★★



While many of DrawRace's tracks are generic to look at, the new method of play makes them feel totally new.



Whenever a track is complete, you can then go online with it. A great way of extending DrawRace's longevity.



You're not going to find gob-smacking visuals like in Real Racing, but the racing itself is easily just as good.

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Firemint Pty Ltd

Real Racing HD

Amazing graphics, perfect controls and loads of vehicles – is this the best racer on the iPad?

Real Racing has been the definitive racer for the iPhone since the game's release in June 2009. Its first-person perspective is unmatched, the graphics sublime and the AI aggressive. So, when an iPad version was announced in time for the device's release, we couldn't have been more excited – the best racing game on a multitouch device was finally going HD.

We can't help but be a little disappointed though. There are no new tracks or vehicles, the cars still don't have transparent windows, and there is still only three gaming modes available. Don't let that put you off though, this is still a classic that feels perfectly at home on the iPad. and these small complaints merely express a sense that so much more could have been done.

The graphics have been tweaked with higher-resolution textures, improved reflections and more. You really do feel like you're racing a real vehicle, and with the larger 9.7-inch display the experience is even more absorbing. The controls feel more natural on the iPad – it's like holding a real steering wheel – and the career mode is still addictive and thorough. You'll find 12 multi-course cups to race through, each with a variation of vehicles to race and buy. The game begins with 'hatch' cars, but soon introduces 'muscle' vehicles and 'exotic' racers. Basically, they get faster and beefier-looking throughout the game. Towards the end of the career mode you'll be clinging to the iPad as the tracks whiz by at breakneck speed. The two other game modes, Time Trial and Quick Play, are exactly as you'd expect and a great way to quickly jump into the game.

There is one important new feature in this iPad version – the ability to re-skin any vehicle using images from your photo album. This isn't as easy as tapping on an image and watching the app do the job, as you'll need to export a built-in skin, edit it in your favourite paint program, and then import the edited skin back into the game. You'll also find a selection of new and user-made skins at the Firemint website, accessible through the game's menu.

Rating ★★★★★



Race against your own ghost in Time Trial.



Create your own paint jobs using an image editor on your PC.



The tracks are varied and exciting.

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Sabec Limited S.A.

Dogfight

Your favourite childhood models come to life on your iDevice

There will be plenty of people who will see the name Airfix, and instantly be taken back to childhood days spent trying to put together a Spitfire. You'll be thrilled to know that you can now bring those models to life. There's no need for running around your living room making aeroplane noises anymore; just a quick download, and you're ready to get flying. If you would care to make plane noises while playing then that's up to you.

It starts with a tutorial to help you master the controls, which involve sliding a crosshair around the screen to steer. It takes some getting used to, but the game itself is more than addictive enough to keep you coming back and there are plenty of small challenges to keep things interesting as you master the setup.

Set in a range of indoor venues, you must take part in aerial dogfights, as well as bomb ground targets. The graphics have a Toy Story appeal, if not cutting-edge clarity, but the real reason for buying Dogfight is the nostalgia and the addictive gameplay. Like bringing your childhood imaginings to life, these little planes can swoop and glide around a living room in some weird parallel dimension where wars are fought out in people's homes on a tiny scale. The inclusion of retina display is great too, because a lot of the in-app planes are true to their original models, so a crisp 3D representation is a real bonus.

The sheer frustration you get from over doing it on the very sensitive controls is almost endearing, as it keeps you coming back again and again. You can alter these, however, by opting for tilt control to manoeuvre your aircraft, but this is recommended only for flying veterans, as one over-zealous move, and you're in trouble.

The only real let down is that there are only five levels after the tutorial, so just as you think you're getting the hang of Dogfight, you reach the end of the road, which does feel slightly anti-climatic. Even so, this is a great download for anyone who has ever had their fingers glued together while finishing their Spitfire's propellers.

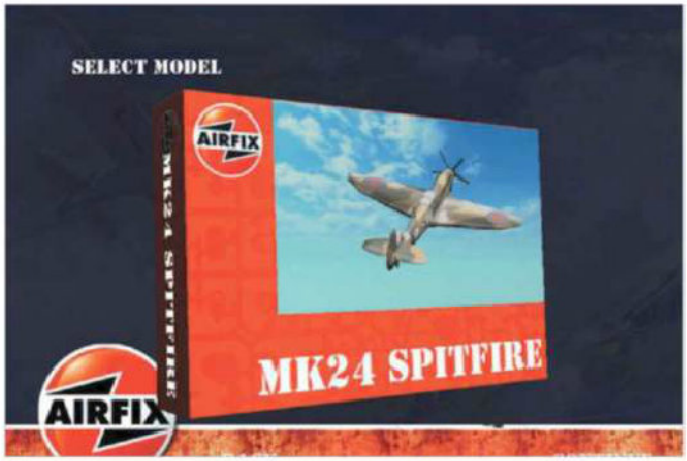
Rating ★★★★½



■ The retina display graphics show off the classic models perfectly.



■ Take on other aircraft and bomb ground targets, all across a variety of interior environments all to typical airfix scale.



■ Choose from a range of iconic Airfix aircraft all boxed up in their airfix packaging just like you would find in the shops.

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Gameloft S.A.

Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X.

Ride into the danger zone...



Ubisoft's arcade dog-fighter received a relatively lukewarm reception when it was released for home platforms a while back; impressively, the game's outing on the iPhone retains most of the functions of the original, making it something of a technical marvel, and a fun diversion to boot. As crack pilot David Crenshaw, you'll tackle a campaign across 13 missions that take in aerial battles with other jets, air-to-ground combat, bombing runs, and more. Although the virtual flight yoke isn't particularly satisfying to use, it is accurate. Far more intriguing, though, are the accelerometer controls, which enable you to spin and roll your iPhone to steer your plane. This is where the game comes into its own, as you fly intuitively around the varied environments lining up targets, completing objectives and evading trouble. The smooth visuals show a level of polish rarely seen on the iPhone, while Bluetooth and online multiplayer modes are an added bonus, making for a great overall package.

Rating ★★★★★



Listening to your own music is another feature that made this port great.



H.A.W.X. is one of the best-looking videogame ports on the iPhone.





This application will blow you away with its realism. Look left and right while on the ride.

The virtual rollercoaster has all the same twists and turns as the real thing.

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Kuan Yong

AirCoaster

Twist, turn and loop the loop with this crazy application



It seems ridiculous that you could get anywhere near a convincing rollercoaster ride experience on the iPhone, but you really can with this incredible app. Built on 3D models of rollercoasters and using advanced graphics, it enables you to experience a rollercoaster ride in your front room. Not only that, but as you move the iPhone around, you can actually see around you as you go, giving you the feeling of really being there. The kind of detail that has gone into this application to make it so lifelike, in terms of speeds and motion, is astounding.

This is a great app for getting an idea of the capabilities of the iPhone. If you only download one app from this section then it has to be this one, just so you can experience the ultimate in virtual rollercoasters. If you are a real daredevil, you can turn the app around as you go and experience a rollercoaster ride going backwards!

Rating ★★★★½

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

The Sims 3

Create a perfectly reasonable human being and then mess their life up

Activision has a lot to answer for. It was the company's seminal title, Little Computer People, released in 1985 that provided a template for EA to heartily exploit with The Sims franchise. In case you've slept through the chart-hogging releases, it's all about creating a character with certain traits, then organising their life so that they are fed, watered, cleaned, have money, friends and a job. Then get your Sim out into Sim-land to meet others, create friendships and meet objectives, while pandering to their personality-trait generated whims.

So, the mobile version follows the same concept, starting with character creation where your Sim can be as conservative or a trampy as the initial wardrobe allows. There are five personality traits to select from, which dictate how the Sim reacts to others and what demands they are likely to make.

The presentation for all this, right up to plonking your Sim in their house, is first rate. The screens feel nicely designed and everything is easy to select with the tap-and-go control. When the Sim leaves the house, it switches to an overhead three-quarters view and your figure is now a tiny stick person. In some respects this was an inevitable consequence of the small screen, but it still doesn't look great, although it makes navigating around the town simple enough. It's an understandable compromise.

Once another character meets your Sim there are multiple choice actions to select, dictating how the other character now views you. If you were hoping for options for pistol-whipping and armed robbery, prepare to be disappointed – this isn't Sim GTA. In fact, no matter how unpleasant your character traits, it's quite hard to be really nasty, just mildly unpleasant or creepy. The aim then is to actually get on and discover the 73 goals that can be unlocked. If you like ordering other people's lives or just want to have fun with a character that's the opposite of yourself, then there's much to enjoy in The Sims and it has a good deal of medium-term playability. If you're disappointed that you can't go on a crack-whore crime spree then this is, perhaps, not the game for you.

Rating ★★★★½



Keeping your Sim clean is an essential part of the game. Honest. Otherwise they smell and no-one will like them. So makes sure they take regular showers. No perving now.

The first step is to get the most trampy outfit in the wardrobe then set the personality trait to Sleazy. Perfect.







Price: £1.99/$2.99 Developer: 3D M gic Kft

Alpine Crawler World

Sideways scrolling all over the world



Sideways-scrolling action over three tough terrain types. There's free ride, time trial and challenge modes to get your teeth into here, four different cars and 30 levels in total. The graphics are good for a sideways scroller (though not Monster Truck Nitro good) and the control is spot on. The trick is to go fast enough to make the times while avoiding flipping the car or crunching it and losing health points. It's nicely balanced and the graphics are smooth.



You'll want to avoid landings like this as it depletes your health very quickly.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Octane Technologies

Space Buggy

Scroll baby, scroll. And then do some leaping and bouncing like when I was a lad



This parallax sideways scroller has possibly the worst thought out control system going. Which is a pity because everything is fine, from the power-ups to the bouncing, leaping buggy and a race against the clock over 25 environments. There's a forwards button that once pressed, moves the buggy forwards at one speed. A backwards button reverses this. The tilt sensor is to help keep your buggy from ending up on its roof, but this is hit and miss. The result is it runs along at times with no input from the player.



Awww come on ref, the buggy was clearly over the line.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Hanbin Kim

Polar Bear Racing

Here's the result of global warming for you



Direct the bear up and down, left and right, all with your finger.



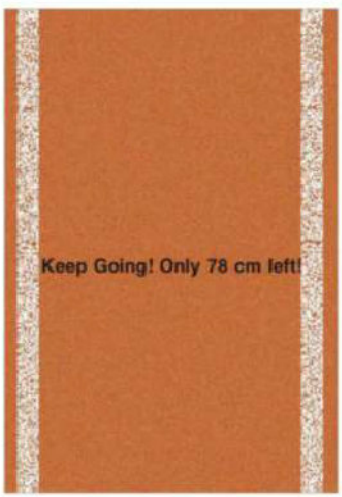
As you'll guess from the title, this racer doesn't involved pouty babes and petrol-sucking machines. Instead, it's an ecological message wrapped up in an arcade game. Control the polar bear as it escapes. One finger touches the screen to accelerate, the other traces the position of the bear. Sausage fingers will find this hard, but it works for kids – and that's where the graphics are aimed as well.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Robbie Powles

Finger Sprint

Let your fingers do the walking and your score do the talking



Compare your performance against other scores, or the online worldwide leaderboard of finger athletes.



Cast aside any notion that this is a finger-operated version of Super Sprint. It isn't. There's a track, a choice of distances and when the starter's gun fires, your fingers have to race up the track by making long stroking movements on the screen. The track scrolls along until the end. High scores are stored in the app or can be uploaded to a worldwide leaderboard. As a concept it's Track & Field stripped down to the wood. Dull to look at, tedious to play.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £2.99/$4.99 Developer: Cobra Mobile Ltd

Low Grav Racer 2 HD

A fast-paced sci-fi racer for your iPad

There's 18 tracks included in this hover racer, each with incredible graphics that include detailed track-side scenery and real-time reflections. The vehicles are a mix of floating racing pods, and as you race power-ups appear in the track that enable you to fire an assortment of weapons or receive a speed boost. The AI is totally aggressive – it's a struggle to reach first by the end of the race.



A time trial mode is included for you to perfect your flying/racing skills.

Rating ★★★★½

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Brian Pratt

Awesome Ball

Cheaper than a rubber ball and a printer, we guess



The built-in backgrounds are rather uninspired.

If you enjoy passing the time by bouncing a ball and looking at photos on your iPhone, consider this an efficiency tool that lets you do both at once. You select from different balls, choose pictures from your library to decorate the walls and floor, and then flick and shake the phone around to bounce the ball around the virtual room. And that's it…

There's an ad-free 'Plus' version with custom sounds, but really, at that price, why not just chuck a rubber ball around?

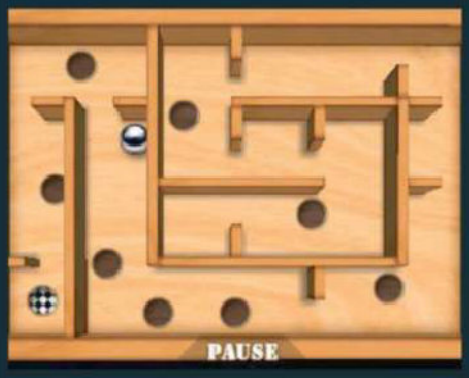
Rating ★★½☆☆

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Elias Pietilä

Wooden Labyrinth 3D

Take a moment to get your (ball)bearings

It didn't take app developers long to realise that the iPhone had the perfect array of features to recreate the simplest of physics-based toys digitally. It lead to a substantial number of wooden maze/metal ball type apps, but this is one of the best, combining the iPhone's motion sensor and accelerometer to create a naturalistic effect – you can even make the ball hop and bounce just like the real thing. Even the free version creates endless random labyrinths.



It may be just wooden box, but it's one of the most tangible sims out there.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Glu Games Inc

Deer Hunter 3D

A game for all seasons

Despite its title, Deer Hunter 3D lets you do a lot more than just hunt 3D deer – yep, you can also stalk bears, turkey, moose and more besides in this hunting sim. You survey each scene through your scoped rifle, before selecting a target to zoom in on, steadying your aim, and taking a shot. It all sounds rather simple, but it's actually quite a tense affair, and not half as brutal as the real thing, obviously.



The environments are surprisingly detailed for an iPhone title.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Gameloft S.A.

Asphalt 6: Adrenaline HD

For all intents and purposes, this is Ridge Racer. It might have a different name, and include extra modes, but with the ridiculous drifting, the speed boosts and the slick arcade presentation, everything here nods towards Ridge Racer as a big influence. It's a good pick-up-and-play racer that doesn't demand too much of your time per go, and is quick enough to get into, although there are plenty of cars and tracks to unlock if you do want to invest more time into it. The track action on the whole is also pretty satisfying as the tilt control is very responsive and the competitor AI gives you just enough of a challenge to keep things interesting.

Rating ★★★★☆



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

Reckless Racing

The strength of this top-down racer is that it offers a variety of control schemes, something most racing games are surprisingly reluctant to do. So, after having picked from the likes of Half-Wheel or Tank, you whizz around in another top-down racer that isn't quite as punishing as Death Rally, but arguably more enjoyable. The tracks are short and punchy, the career mode has plenty to unlock, and while there isn't a lot of variety to the skidding and screeching, you don't have to be a Lewis Hamilton to steer your way to victory in this one. It's a really good balance that should mean that while experienced gamers manage to find some depth to the experience, more casual players can still enjoy it.

Rating ★★★☆☆



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Resolution Interactive AB

Aqua Moto Racing 2

If hitting the track is a bit too unorthodox, Aqua Moto Racing 2 provides an aquatic alternative, and does it well. The mechanics are fairly bare bones, with auto acceleration and on-screen buttons used only to brake and perform stunts, but the tilt controls for steering are precise and responsive. The sea is the real star; the waves have real physical properties that you'll have to fight against, and it's believable enough to be worth the price of admission alone. Water based gaming always tends to be pretty impressive regardless of the platform for precisely this reason and this game is no different. It's marriage of visuals and control make it a joy to play and very easy to recommend to anyone.

Rating ★★★★☆



Price: Free
Developer: Exoweb Ltd S.A.

High Noon

This is one of the most inventive uses of the iPhone we've seen. You're a cowboy, involved in a series of shoot-outs with various villains in the old west, and you must be quick on the draw to take them down. However, that's only the bare bones of a premise. The real hook to this game comes in how this all plays out.

Before, you fire you must holster your weapon (holding it to your hip will do this), then bring it up, aim using the accelerometer, and fire at your enemy by tapping the screen. There are plenty of levels and upgrades to grab, and with Game Center, Facebook and Multiplayer support, you'll be gun slinging for hours and sharing your latest achievements with friends.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £1.99/$2.99
Developer: HIT Entertainment

Thomas Tilt and Go

The idea of Thomas Tilt And Go is to tilt the iPhone to make Thomas roll along the tracks and collect enough items to progress to the next level – easy enough – but there are points where you must switch tracks to keep going. The game never tells you how to do this, so we had to guess. It turns out you have to swipe just before the junction, but it only works about one in every five attempts. It makes for a very frustrating game and isn't really fair on children, who shouldn't have to work around bad design. Updates have attempted to fix some of these issues, but for the asking price we're still not convinced this is worth shelling out for. So, while this is a game that clearly looks the part we really can't recommend it.

Rating ★☆☆☆☆

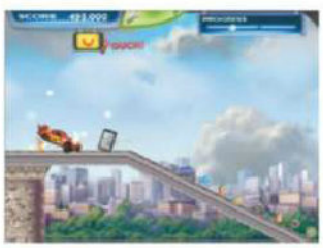


Price: Free
Developer: Dedalord S.R.L

Falling Fred

Ever imagined how fun it would be to control a character as they tumble down an air vent? No, neither have we, but that's exactly what happens in Falling Fred. As poor Fred falls you're tasked with steering him out of the way of fans, vents and more using the accelerometer. If Fred hits any of these obstacles, the game depicts his injuries in real-time via a cartoon face in the top left corner of the screen. Once he's taken enough damage, he strikes the floor, whereby a newspaper article gives you the distance fallen and injury. It's gory, but incredibly funny to boot and the responsive tilt controls mean that you won't think twice about having another go and flinging Fred down that shaft again.

Rating ★★★★☆

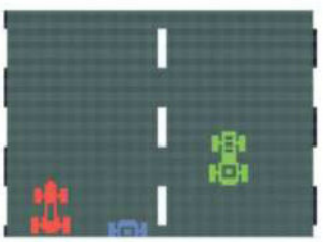


Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Walt Disney

Cars 2

While you might expect a game with the title 'Cars' to be a racing game, Disney has chosen to be a little more original with its movie tie-in, and instead created a platform game. Similar to perpetual running games like Canabalt or Robot Unicorn Attack, Cars 2 sees you constantly rolling forward, and requires you to tap the screen at the right moment in order to jump over gaps and obstacles. It's a simple idea, but one that's taken to satisfying extremes, especially on the harder levels where you'll have to combo accurate jumps together. Its simple control mechanic means that anyone can pick this game up and make sense of it, but that doesn't make it the most original game or the best of its kind.

Rating ★★★☆☆



Price: £0.69/ $0.99
Developer: Fuad Nasirov

8-Bit Race

Our recollection of 8-bit racing was pseudo-3D arcade games and then full on simulators. Oh, and top-down Spy Hunter-style efforts as well. And that's what you get here, a top-down view with a scrolling road and cars lumbering towards you. Dodge them to score points and finish levels, hit them to lose a life. Control is accelerometer left-right dodging and is acceptable, and there are power ups. Sadly the graphics are abysmal and it provides almost no enjoyment at all. Even as a trip down memory lane this would need some particularly opaque, rose-tinted glasses to seem passable. Unfortunately there was a reason games like this were left behind and those sims and 3D racers took over.

Rating ★☆☆☆☆



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Artur Grzegorczyn Madman

Dogged Wings: World War II



As far as air combat games go, Dogged Wings is decent, if not spectacular. You earn stars to upgrade your flying machine, and purchase new planes as you get stuck into the campaign missions. The graphics are also very impressive, with some gorgeous Sun effects that really help to cell the majesty and glamour of taking to the skies. Our main gripe is the motion-controlled steering, which is occasionally a bit clunky, requiring you to hold your device relatively flat, which isn't really that conducive to seeing what's happening on the screen. But otherwise the combination of touch and tilt control works adequately.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £1.49/$1.99
Developer: 3Lynx, LLC

Kimimon



Kimimon is so very nearly the virtual pet app we've been crying out for, but it falls just short of the mark. It's cute and very reminiscent of a tamagotchi, and there's plenty of environments and ways to accessorise your Kimimon, which is essentially just a blob of goo. You play games with your creature to progress, and while it does support in-app purchases, the in-built features are almost enough to keep you occupied without having to buy more. However, you will eventually tire of what's on offer as your Kimimon grows. It's a shame, as it's otherwise quite a good little game and if had just delivered a little more up front it would have kept us occupied for far longer. Solid, but not essential.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Mad Processor GmbH

Uber Racer 3D Sandstorm



The runt of the litter, Uber Racer is ugly. Blocky backgrounds, shocking pop-up and sludgy browns are on show as Mad Processor convinces us that post-apocalyptic Earth is horrible to look at. Mission accomplished. What Uber Racer lacks in looks it makes up for in racing, pitting you against the clock in unique environments as you race through abandoned ships and crumbling ruins. It's not the most exhilarating game you'll ever play, but it does offer something different to everything else on these pages, and won't hurt your bank balance either, it just won't keep you coming back again and again for more of the same.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £2.99/$4.99
Developer: Freeverse, Inc

SlotZ Racer



If a simulation like Real Racing is a bit heavy for you, SlotZ Racer could be what you're looking for. Anyone who's played Scalextric will immediately be at home: the controls simply requiring you to press the accelerator to go and ease off on corners, lest your car go flying. Simple to understand and easy to get into, but obviously difficult to master; the perfect gaming combination. Its best side by far is its multiplayer, supporting four players on the same device comfortably. The track editor also deserves mention, as it completes the Scalextric-like experience by enabling players to slot track pieces together to create whatever design takes their fancy. That turns a few minutes of fun into something far more substantial.

Rating ★★★★★



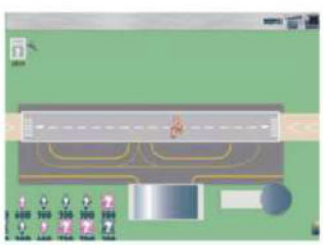
Price: £1.99/$2.99
Developer: G5 Entertainment AB

Supermarket Mania



Stacking shelves might be a soul-destroying job, but it sure makes for a good game. The aim is to queue up actions to fill shelves, clean up mess, and refill trolleys, prioritising them to make sure that customers get what they want and leave quickly and happily. The game looks great on a Retina Display and the touch controls are clear and responsive. This is one of a long line of really engaging and hard to put down sims that have been hitting iDevices of late and it stands up well to the competition. While it doesn't do much to differentiate itself, it's one of the more polished and fun pick-up-and-play apps on the iPhone and compared to the competition it's pretty well priced for the amount of time you'll spend with it.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: Free
Developer: Quantum Design Group

Backyard Pilot



Delivering cargo and passengers sounds fun, but unfortunately Backyard Pilot is hampered by poor controls and design choices. Steering the plane is done by tilting your iDevice horizontally; to ascend and descend you tilt it vertically. Sounds simple, but there's a sluggish delay, and the screen doesn't rotate with the plane. Also, if auto-rotate isn't switched off, then the screen will flip into portrait/horizontal mode as soon as you start to steer the aircraft. It's confusing, and not in the least fun to play. When you consider the number of flight sims and plane games out there this had an up-hill climb to start with and it's done itself no favours here. Still, at least it's free to download, which we guess is something.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: RealNetworks, Inc

Bad Air Day



Despite the juvenile theme, underneath the simple look of this game you'll find a fairly solid score attack experience. As hotel guests ride the lift, it is Artie's job to ensure their passage is a pleasant one, which asks that you waft his noxious gas into the vents above while preventing the lift-goers nostrils from flaring. Hover the methane too long across the guests smell receptors, and they'll expire; three deaths, and Artie's out. Toilet humour of the most base kind, but really the kind of harmless fun that makes small games on the iPhone so enjoyable. Recognisable caricature visuals and cheeky humour make this a compulsive pick-up-and-play title that you'll want to keep around if only to lighten your mood.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £1.99/$2.99
Developer: Com2us USA, Inc

Zombie Runaway



Often the most basic ideas are the most impressive, and that's one of the reasons you won't be able to put Zombie Runaway down. Your objective of charging through the graveyard is simple; stay in one of three lanes to evade tombstones or leap traps. The risk-reward of the varied boosters – which increase speed and allow your tubby undead to barrel through stone – help those keen to keep an eye out for score-boosting opportunities find a deeper experience here, while unlockable bonuses add to the game's longevity for everyone. It's not overly complex in terms of concept, design or visuals, but that same sparse feel is what makes it so easy to fall for and why it's likely to find a happy home on your device.

Rating ★★★★★

Sports



For a brief moment sports games can let you believe you are one of the all-time great athletes, boxing with champions, kicking around with legends and scoring points for fun. So put on your boots and get out there.

Top Paid Apps	Top Free Apps
NBA Jam by EA Sports ★★★★★	PBA Bowling Spare Challenge ★★★★★
Midnight Bowling ★★★★	Frisbee Forever ★★★★★
FIFA 12 ★★★★½	StarDunk ★★★★½

Staff pick of the section

Let's Golf ★★★★½	Fight Night Champion ★★★★½



Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee – if you can.



Price: £1.99/$2.99
Developer: Full Control ApS

Smack Boxing HD

Pugilist perfection? Or just a battered brawler?



While this simple conversion from an iPhone game starts pretty well, with a tutorial that guides you through the moves, once you hit actual fighting it can quickly descend into frantic tapping, tilting and swiping without any elements of skill. The control system is well thought out with a tilt for moving and taps and swipes for different punches and blocks. However, it feels as though the controls are a little behind the action and if you do manage to get past the first few opponents, as the difficulty level increases, the frustration can reach the point of becoming unbearable.

If you can manage to tame the controls we can imagine this would be wild fun and extremely satisfying, unfortunately we must lack the killer instinct.

Rating ★★★½★

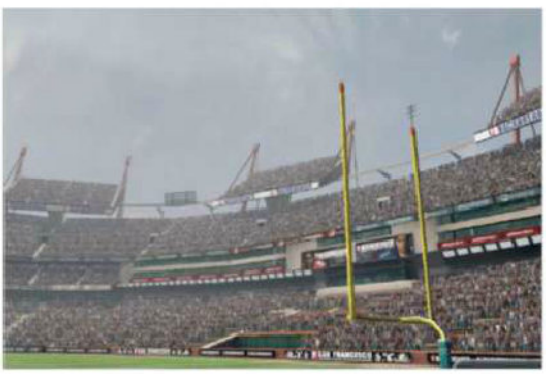
Price: £1.99/$2.99 **Developer:** NaturalMotion Games

Backbreaker 2: Vengeance HD

American football for people who don't like American football

As a game originally created to showcase NaturalMotion's impressive animation tech, its lack of features and official NFL licence led to it being largely ignored upon release. Matching Madden if you're out to make an American football game is a fool's errand, it seems.

On the iPad, though, boiled down to a couple of gridiron-themed mini-games and with little more than that great animation and chasing high scores to keep you coming back, it kind of works.



Environmental conditions and time of day are little more than window-dressing.

Backbreaker 2 offers the chance to play from both sides. In one mode you attempt to score a touchdown, and in the other you try to stop the computer. Calling that American football is a bit like calling a penalty shoot-out a World Cup final, but this simplicity allows the game make to work on the touchscreen.

The first mode, Tackle Alley, starts you off with the ball in your end zone. As you progress, the opposition gets increasingly formidable. Although it's never too difficult to reach the other end, getting into the upper echelons of the leaderboards requires you to take full advantage of scoring opportunities.

The new addition to the series is the Vengeance mode, which puts you into the role of a defender. As above, it starts as a simple one-on-one, but moving through the levels will pit you against waves of blockers who try to guard the ball carrier. It's not as much fun as attacking yourself, but it's a worthwhile addition and a nice change of pace that can quickly grow on you as a tactical challenge as much as anything else.

Rating ★★★★½





Customising your player will put your name on the back of their jersey.

Environmental conditions and time of day are little more than window-dressing.

Price: £1.49/$1.99 Developer: Digital Bridges Limited t/a I-Play

Flick Cricket

For when you need to flick it, flick it good

When you first sit down with Flick Cricket, it's likely you'll be utterly baffled. With one of the simplest interfaces to ever touch down on Apple's device, it's still a mystery just how you're supposed to hit the ball. You click 'next ball', the screen changes and out of nowhere a top down cricket ball flies into view prompting you to attack your screen and miss… until it clicks. Flick Cricket's genius is just how basic it is. After a few overs it all starts to make perfect sense and slamming a ball for a six carries with it huge rewards. Considering gaming has always struggled where the sport is concerned, this is genuinely a revelation, despite how fundamental it may be. With it constantly wanting you to connect via Facebook, and the ability to play games through the social networking device, Flick Cricket is a surprise hit. If it had been set at the lower price point, the score may even have been higher.

Rating ★★★★½



Absolutely insane to look at, Flick Cricket soon makes itself penetrable.



No one could have predicted controlling a bunch of dots could result in any sense of fun and yet it has.

Price: £1.49/$1.99 Developer: Digital Bridges Limited t/a I-Play

Red Bull X-Fighters

Putting life before limb

No matter how many times you see it, it's incredibly addictive watching chosen members of the public perform insane tricks as they sit on a motorbike. Flying off ramps and executing all manner of stunts, the skill and courage needed is off the chart. It's this thrill that Red Bull X-Fighters wants to achieve, only with the comfort blanket that when you're finished, your arm won't be in eight different places. There's plenty to get involved with from time trials to stunt-based events, but it's the muddled controls that let it down. Trying to keep balanced is criminally hard whereas attempting to flip your vehicle and then landing successfully is never easy. You will adapt the more you play, but it never feels enjoyable and there's always a hint that when all is said and done you'll be frustrated. If you think you can get used to it, though, Red Bull X-Fighters does have a lot of depth meaning you won't feel ripped off.

Rating ★★★★★



Being able to listen to your own iTunes soundtrack while foolishly hurling yourself off a ramp never seems to get old.



The stunts that can be achieved are fun to watch, but trying to land without crashing is far too hard.

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** FrogDogMedia LLC

Let's Golf

This arcade-style 3D game will have you pitching like a pro



The selection of books is quite good, with a few classics.



Let's Golf looks like a teeny-bopper golf game with its cutesy characters and slick graphics. For the first ten minutes or so of play, we were left unimpressed. And then, persevering, we started to get a little better at hitting the right marks on the golf swing. Next on our course (pardon the pun) to enlightenment, we started to factor in the wind and paid that little bit more attention to the positioning of each shot; lo and behold, we were on a death race to complete each course at each level before we knew it. And because Let's Golf is such a good game, we are still trying to attain top status, proving its longevity in the face of stiff competition.

Each of the characters has their own attributes and as you complete competitions, you can pick up items that enhance different elements of your game. The courses get harder and harder as you go on, and each different level setting means that you need to fine-tune your technique that little bit more as you go.

Rating ★★★★☆

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Hudson Entertainment

Catch The Egg

You will never see another game like it, that's for sure



Considering Catch The Egg is from Hudson, the brain behind Bomberman, intrigue is high as soon as you decide to download it. From an originality perspective, it's up there with the best.

At the start of each stage, you must tilt the iPhone/iPod up as if you were looking into the sky. Once this is done, you'll see an egg floating in the sky. The app will then work out its current height giving you an idea of how long it'll take to drop. After a brief countdown, the makeshift ball will start to fall and at the right time it's up to you to drag your iPhone/iPod towards you as if you were delicately trying to grasp an actual egg.

Every now and then it's oddly lifelike with the only real problem being how fiddly it can be. If you're on the lookout for an app that's completely different, however, this will suffice.





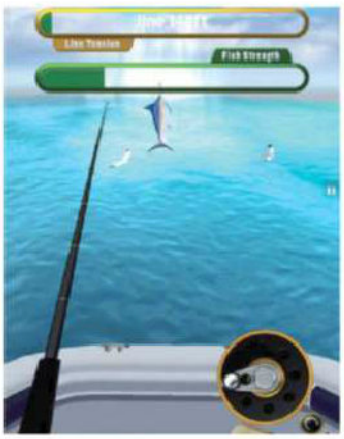
This uses Apple's device intelligently but never succeeds at what it's trying to do.

Rating ★★★☆☆

Price: £1.99/$2.99 Developer: Freeverse, Inc

Flick Fishing HD

Does the iPad version have enough to reel in the customers?



Great graphics make this a marvel to see on the glossy screen.



Gameplay is limiting and can get tired quickly.



Flick Fishing is one of those love it or hate it games – much like the sport itself. However, the HD version adds incredibly sumptuous graphics to a control system that's a lot of fun. You have to flick your iPad to cast off and then use a rotational finger point to reel in your caught fish back into your boat.

Sadly there's not real longevity to this game and, like the iPhone version, you're really at the mercy of the app and when it decides to feed you a fish, and once you've caught few dozen fish the system can feel a little bit old and boring. This app has a very limited shelf life and only those who are really keen on angling will persevere through all of the levels. For everyone else, the system will feel too random and lacking in skill.

This is a great game to show off the graphics of the iPad – and it truly does look stunning – but Flick Fishing HD is not one to lose a lot of time to purely in gaming terms.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: P1 Sports Ltd

Ronnie O'Sullivan's Snooker

Ball blasting fun on the iPhone



With snooker's slow-pace and focus on angles, the majority of devices have been able to incorporate a working method for playing the sport. Thankfully, the iPhone/iPod is no different.

Smartly deciding to allow your finger to be the main port of call, there's a nice rhythm to Ronnie O'Sullivan's Snooker that you'll be able to get your head around in minutes. There are a few blips, namely the wildly skewed difficulty and fussy controls when trying to add spin to a ball, but ultimately if digital snooker is your thing, this has you covered.

With the knowledge that there's also a multiplayer mode to lose yourself in it's a bit of a bargain considering it carries with it iTunes' lowest price point.





It may be a by the numbers snooker game, but it pulls off all the basics well.

Low on gimmicks, it's great to see the foundations kept simple in this game.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

Fight Night Champion

Step into the ring with EA's portable pugilist simulator

EA's Fight Night franchise is famed for its intuitive controls, immersive gameplay and stunning, photo-realistic visuals. While the iPhone can't quite match the performance of the home console versions, you'll still be impressed by just how enjoyable Fight Night Champion actually is, even if it does lack a few things that most iPhone sports games now take for granted.

Once your fighter is created, you can head to the main meat and potatoes of Fight Night Champion, the Legacy Mode. If we're honest, it's actually missing a fair amount of meat. This is something of a pity, as the actual controls themselves are superb.

The screen is effectively split into quarters, and depending on which part of the screen you touch will determine what part of your opponent's body you hit. Punches are pulled off by simply touching the relevant area of the screen, but it's possible to pull off far more devastating blows should you so wish to. Holding down your finger for a second then swiping delivers devastating uppercuts and hooks that can directed to specific parts of the body. Each boxer also has a signature move, which is pulled off by creating a tick on either the top or bottom half of the screen.

When it's all added together, it allows for some pretty responsive controls, and it's hardly surprising that EA calls it 'Total Fight Control'. There are occasions where longer presses sometimes aren't recognised, but this rarely happens, and never to the extent that it will cost you a match. In fact, the only thing that does let Fight Night's control system down is that movement is handled by using occasionally loose tilt controls.

Multiplayer is disappointing too, as EA hasn't featured any worldwide online mode, allowing you to only play locally. It's solid enough, of course, but the ability to play anyone from anywhere around the world would have added greatly to Fight Night's longevity beyond the solo campaign.

Rating ★★★★☆



■ ENDURANCE: You decide how to patch your boxer up. It can be done automatically if it's too much hassle.



■ There are 23 boxers, ranging from Welterweight Ricky Hatton to Middleweight Jake LaMotta. Each one will be instantly recognisable to fans.



■ The control system works well enough, although your boxer is prone to moving around unintentionally as you accidentally tilt your iPhone.

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

Tiger Woods PGA Tour 12 for iPad

Not quite a hole in one, but just about makes par



This is more of an update than a sequel to previous games, although in fairness it doesn't deviate especially far from the controls of its predecessors. After all, if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

The touchscreen swing mechanic returns, requiring the player to draw their finger down a meter and swipe to swing. Draw and fade on the ball by curving your finger's movement, and add spin by swiping during its trajectory. It feels better on the iPad than the iPhone, with the larger screen allowing for tighter and more precise control over your shots.

The bulk of the play takes place in the PGA Tour, which sees you compete for cash prizes, which can then be used to enter tournaments or buy equipment. Smaller modes come in the form of the Tiger Challenge – which offers objective-based challenges – and Closest To The Pin. The latter mode is self-explanatory, but EA's decision to limit this multiplayer mode just to Facebook is odd, seeing as few gamers link Facebook to iPad.

The disappointing multiplayer decisions don't end there. While multiplayer is included, it's confined to Bluetooth and Wi-Fi, which is a shame as online play with the wider world would have made the app a more tempting proposition.

If such features were included, Tiger Woods PGA Tour would feel essential, rather than just a recommendation. As it stands it may be the best golf game on iPad, but it's far from being the best game overall and short of what its potential promises.

Rating ★★★★★



The courses in this game are often impressive.



Swing: Holding your finger at the bottom of the swing meter will activate a power shot.



The controls are simple enough for anyone to pick up and enjoy.







■ Mini Golf 99 Holes ticks all the right boxes.

Price: Free **Developer:** Digital Chocolate, Inc

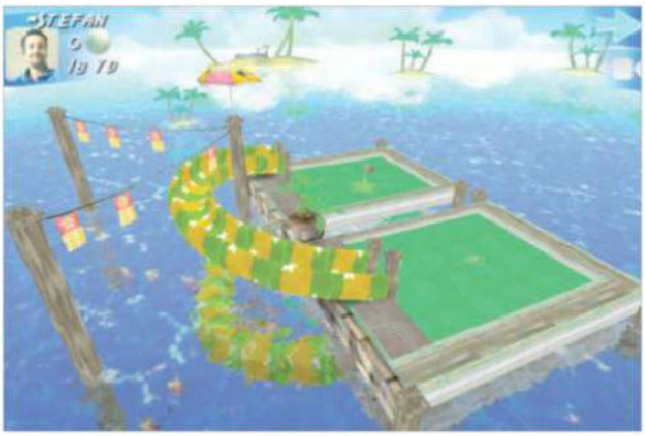
Mini Golf 99 Holes: Theme Park

A great expansion of mini-golf



Much like ten-pin bowling, mini-golf seems to be incredibly adaptable when it comes to the gaming genre. Regardless of the device, the method works and more often that not is enjoyable on some level. Unfortunately, too much repetition can get a little dull and this is where Mini Golf 99 Holes tries to spice it up. As well as the standard and well-worked power bar mechanic, special moves have been brought into play. Do well and you'll be granted the option to unleash it, giving you powers such as stopping the ball in its tracks. On top of this, there's also a medal system in place. Aiming to stay within par while picking up collectables littered around a hole will see you heading towards a gold medal – the usual silver and bronze waiting for those who aren't as precise; it's a fine way to keep events interesting. You will have to drop money to get more holes, but all-in-all this is a very good mini-golf game.

Rating ★★★★★





■ Stunning graphics draw you right into the game.

Price: £3.99/$5.99 **Developer:** EUROCENTER

Adrenaline Golf HD Online

Crazy golf gets a stunning high-definition makeover



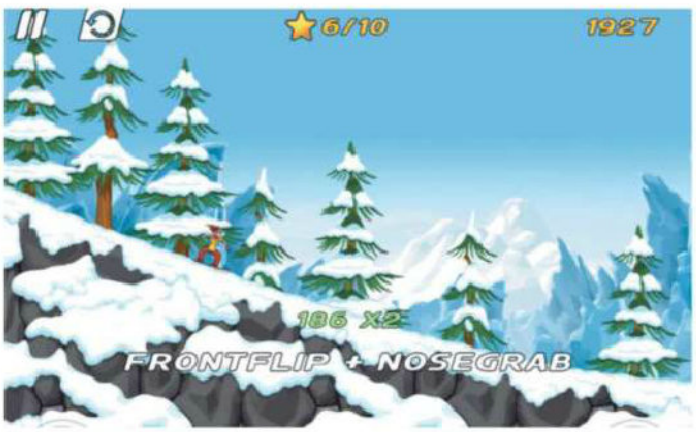
Crazy golf simulators have been around for years and years and have graced pretty much every conceivable platform too. It's no wonder really, as the course can be far wilder and more imaginative then real life can ever be. Adrenaline Golf attempts to build on this by using the comparative gargantuan screen real state of the iPad and touch controls to see you take on a vast array of crazy courses. The graphics are incredible and gameplay is a lot of fun, making this an absorbing and worthy app to buy. The addition of an online element takes the fun to new levels as you try to beat complete strangers from around the world and improve your ranking, which is something a lot more games should be taking note of for the future.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £1.99/$3.99 Developer: Miniclip SA

iStunt 2 HD – Snowboard

Proof that slippery slopes aren't always a bad thing



There's not a great deal to do once you've completed the game, unless you want to collect all the stars.



The game we were reminded of most when playing iStunt 2 was, rather impressively, Sonic The Hedgehog. iStunt 2 shares a lot with the classic Mega Drive title – this is a game about speed, perpetual motion and leaping into the unknown.

Its controls are simple enough. You angle your rider by tilting, with grab tricks performed by pressing the right of the screen. The implementation of the gyroscope is smooth, so pulling off 360 degree mid spins feels rewarding.

But the scoring mechanic plays second fiddle to the game's main preoccupation, which is the successful navigation of levels. The 42 offered here twist up and around themselves, curl into huge loop-de-loops, and ascend and descend into ramps and dips.

Still, the checkpointing isn't too bad, and the responsiveness of the gyroscope ensures iStunt 2 stays enjoyable. It may feel a little like trial and error, but never so much to put you off playing.

Rating ★★★★☆

Price: £2.99/$4.99 Developer: FISHLABS

Snowboard Hero

The safest way to slide down a mountain strapped to a plank



Snowboarding and its culture is about having a good time, and so it is with this game. It's not bogged down in realistic physics and keeping your balance, but rather by speeding down a mountain, pulling wild stunts, and hopefully getting good enough at it to earn some cool stuff. The controls can be learnt in no time, letting you get on with landing triple flips while jumping hundreds of feet into the air.

That said, we can see players getting bored with what's on offer here. There's only so much that can be done with the scenery in a snowboarding game, and with no multiplayer it lacks a competitive edge. It has leaderboards to soften the blow when you're chasing high scores or the best times, but it's not much of a substitute for playing with friends.





Boosting produces a tunnel vision effect, and is useful when chasing times on the final stretch.

The stunts are easy to pull off, letting the controls largely get out of your way.

Rating ★★★★☆

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Eidos Interactive Ltd

Championship Manager 2011

Perfect for when you're on the bench?

Once the preserve of those willing to spend hundreds fine-tuning their home PCs with the latest RAM modules and processors, these days even a pleasant walk in the countryside can harbour the more sedate thrills of football management. Predictably enough, such a development offers both pros and cons.

Firstly, the trend in recent years has been to follow avenues of increasingly excruciating detail. Labyrinthine training regimes, manager conversations – that kind of thing. Lacking the processing grunt to deal with the minuscule amount of difference such interaction would have made to proceedings in any case, this is very much a trading card game in disguise. In fact, contract talks aren't even handled by players directly, as the chairman is left to thrash out deals in some board room with each player's agent. And perhaps some kind of whip. The distraction of press conferences aside then, Championship Manager 2011 offers a welcome release from everyday drudgery.

Sadly though, various issues crop up to spoil the experience, precisely because space, both physical and digital, proves limited. Firstly, players are restricted to first team action only, preventing you from delving into youth development or international management. Secondly, as transfers have the aforementioned degree of indirectness to their structure, negotiations must be entered into in single file lest your team sign four left-backs by accident. The transfer market too, seems a little unrealistic; all but the most prized assets can be tempted away from their respective clubs for easily affordable rates. Players hoping to accumulate more than a single season of play, too, may be disappointed at the prevalence of crashes after that time period.

Other, smaller complaints may focus upon the insistence BGS shows on rating players upon their revised percentage scale, rather than something more memorable. Lacking any facility to compare players directly, you're often forced into superhuman feats of memory. Or perhaps an inability to ignore email messages. Regardless, the fact CM 2011 has secured second place in handheld management, besides that undertaken at home, is evident on this showing.

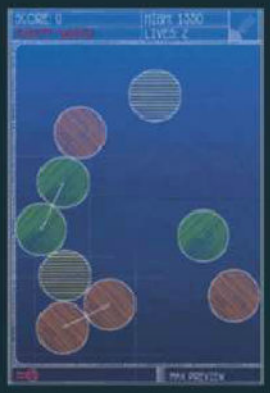
Rating ★★★★★



Impressively, matches are played out in real-time from a top-down perspective, just as you'd experience at home.



Five leagues are available in all – Scotland, England, France, Germany and Italy.





You may not want to read any tips, but trust us when we say that both developers will be on-hand to fill you in as and when it's necessary.

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Zee 3 Limited

Magnetic Billiards: Blueprint

Leave sanity at the door.



It takes a lot for our jaw to drop when playing an iPhone or iPad game, but Magnetic Billiards, of all things, managed to do just that.

Following the rules of billiards, or pool, to some extent, the twist comes in the form of the balls sticking together when they touch. Your goal, then, is to tie them all up, taking as many risky and trick shots as you dare. Such is the focus on these bold moves that if you complete the level in a single go, you won't progress. It becomes more complicated as you wade through each challenge, too, mainly due to a colour puzzle coming into play – balls will only gel together if they're the same shade.

It's a solid idea, and oddly addictive, but the madness arrives in the form of the psychedelic effects, along with the two developers, John and Ste Pickford, often popping up on the screen with words of advice, which it has to be said, is not exactly your standard setup. It can be a bit fiddly on occasion when trying to achieve some truly insane shots, but it's most certainly a unique take on a timeless sport. It won't take long before the urge to go back and try one more time to get a higher score on each table takes over and you can't resist playing Magnetic Billiards as often as possible.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £1.99/$2.99 **Developer:** Celeris, Inc

Virtual Pool

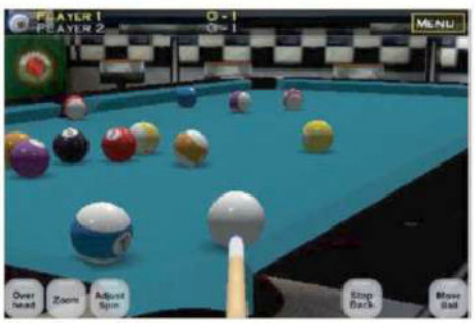
Rack 'em and hustle some serious dollars!



There are a couple of free pool apps floating about the App Store, so it'll be with some trepidation that you fork out for a paid version. With that said, we can lay your mind to rest and positively encourage the download of Virtual Pool. For the low price, you don't just get an extremely good simulation of pool, but also a decent stab at an evolved career mode. This means that as well as quick games that are perfect for bus journeys, you can also travel from pool hall to pool hall, gambling your way up the ranks of the shark elite. Gameplay is extremely good. The controls are simple too, and offer everything you would expect, including different views, easy cue movement and ball-striking action, as well as the option to mess about with spin. A great game.

Rating ★★★★★





Different view options mean you can take a look at the whole table to get your positioning right

Monkey Tennis

When humans will simply no longer do

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Morgan Davies





There's enough options, but none offer an enjoyable experience due to the poor control method.

Matches can be over so quickly, sometimes without you even hitting a ball.



The idea of monkeys playing tennis is fun. As ridiculous as that notion may be, there's just something very appealing about it. So, with the game confirmed all we needed was an app that offered usable controls so we could see a chimp and an orangutan smack a ball back and forth between them. Alas, the reality is the opposite of this. Monkey Tennis is so frustrating to play it never really makes sense. Your finger is sold to you as a racket, meaning to attack the ball you just swipe across the screen. Nine times out of the ten, though, the ball will fly off in a bizarre direction that makes absolutely no sense. It takes away any fluidity that could be had – quite an important entity in the game of tennis – and makes this rather aggravating. As the cost is low there is some scope to try and sort out a system that works for you but you'd be better off just imagining apes engaging in competitive sport. You're likely to enjoy that far more than playing this.

Rating ★★☆☆☆

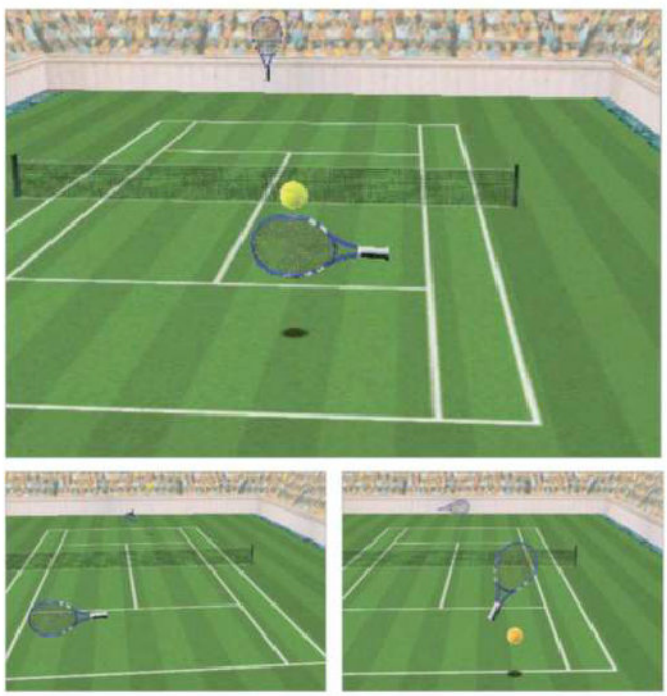
Price: Free **Developer:** Focused Apps

Hit Tennis 2

Sometimes the uncomplicated one is best after all



Hit Tennis 2 pulls no punches. Beautifully simple from the start, it manages to avoid the other pitfalls so many other apps trying to replicate the sport do. With your finger in charge, there's always a worry in some tennis games that control will be out of your hands, no pun intended. As the ball flies off in the wrong direction even though you're sure you attempted something entirely different, the experience lasts all of five minutes. Hit Tennis is the opposite. Forgetting unnecessarily complications like moving around the court in favour of just swinging a racket, you have the time and accuracy needed to pick shots and make sure they go where you want. This results in a tennis game that excels, despite the foundations being stripped away; good matches are always likely. Get into a rally and all of a sudden every shot starts to count just that little bit more.



Hit Tennis 2 is packed full of personality thanks to its characters.

Rating ★★★★☆

Price: £3.99/$5.99 **Developer:** Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

FIFA 12

The beautiful game on the sexiest device. All aboard the showboat!

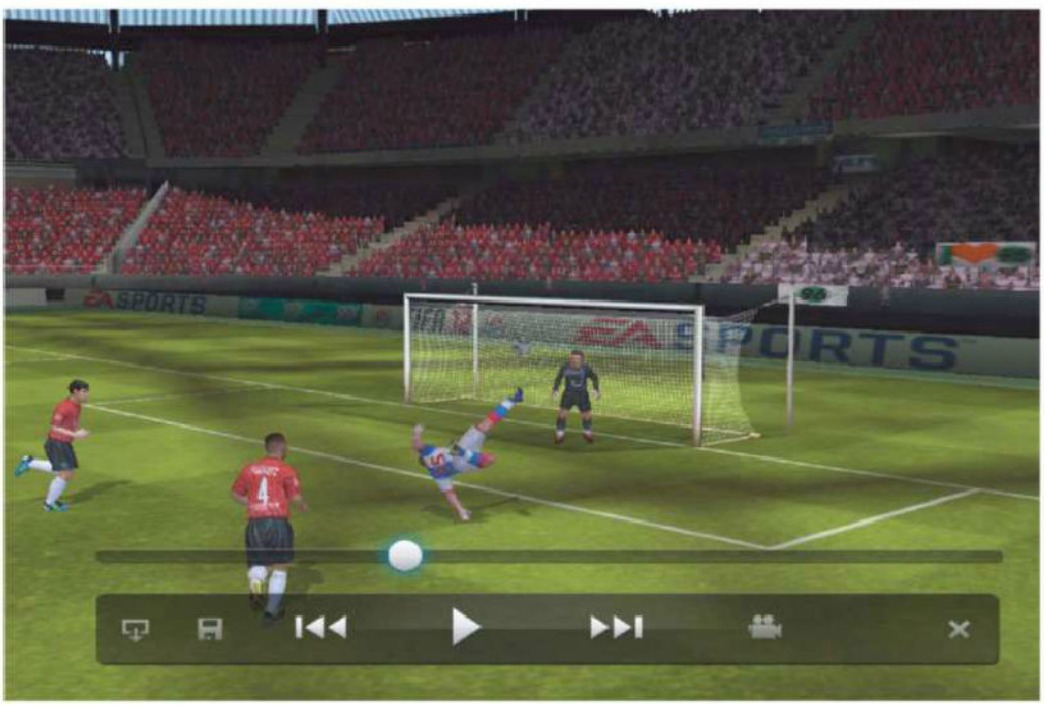
When the iPhone was first launched, the idea of playing football on it was deemed ludicrous. With the controls being touch-screen based, the opinion remained that there was simply no way the beautiful game could ever be replicated with such an awkward system. As many releases have proven, though, with the right amount of patience the method can, oddly, allow you to achieve a very respectable passing game. FIFA 12 is the pinnacle of these attempts so far.

Using the same control setup as already mentioned, it's a wonder how EA has managed to employ such a free-flowing technique. Your pass, shoot and through ball buttons reside on the right-hand side of the screen – transforming into your defensive controls when you're not in possession – with movement dedicated to the stick on the left. It does take time to get your head around and if this is your first iOS footballing experience it's not going to be an easy ride. Our advice to you is to stick with it as when it clicks, FIFA 12 is easily the best of the bunch so far, with some extra touch-screen commands worked in besides the visible button controls to apply more fluidity and finesse to your play. These include tapping a player to pass to them, double-tapping the screen to perform trick moves and swiping directions to indicate the runs that you want your teammates to make. It's a solid system that ensures that your attacks never break down because you can't adjust your fingers quickly enough.

This doesn't mean it's perfect, however, as when you're ready to unleash furious vengeance in front of goal, shots can be wildly erratic. It doesn't take much away from FIFA 12 and the build-up play can be so satisfying it will earn your forgiveness.

With the official licence giving you the option to enjoy a friendly kick-around or take the managerial reigns of your favourite team, few other mobile sports game can compete with FIFA's depth. The total package seems to always have you coming back for more, especially when you're on an annoying commute.

Rating ★★★★½



Great goals can be relived again and again thanks to an intuitive replay system.





The passing feels much improved this year on the last FIFA effort.

Ferrari GT: Evolution

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Gameloft S.A.

A truly brilliant racing game



As this release is an officially licensed game and has the full blessing of Ferrari, we had extremely high hopes for it. And we weren't to be disappointed. This is without doubt one of the slickest, most realistic racing games available from the App Store. You get to drive Ferraris, of course, and you can then choose to play in a Quick Arcade mode or opt for the more satisfying Career mode where you take a lesser Ferrari and accumulate victories to earn enough money to afford better vehicles. Controls are pretty standard: you use the accelerometer to turn left and right, while on screen there is an accelerator and a brake pedal. The physics used are very realistic and the feeling of speed is exceptional. The graphics are also really good and it's this finishing touch that makes this a stand-out favourite. This is one game that lives up to its illustrious branding and delivers a Ferrari flavoured punch with style.

Rating ★★★★★



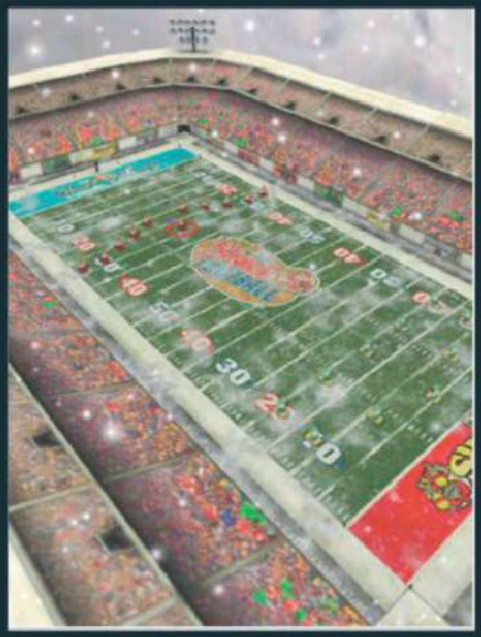


Get your pedal to the metal in a Ferrari.

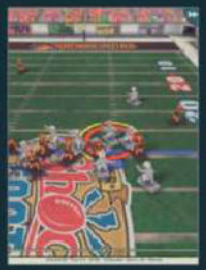
Shock Football HD

Price: £2.49/$3.99 **Developer:** Chillingo Ltd

Tough to master but well worth a bit of patience



Think fast. To make accurate passes you have to be alert.



Split screen. Take on mates in this easy to use mode.



Super Shock Football HD is another ported iPhone game and, like many games, it really suits the bigger screen of the iPad. On the iPhone version, picking out longer passes was tough enough, given the screen size let alone actually making the pass given the control system (users must drag a pass target onto the recipient of the pass before the target timer runs down). On the iPad, however, this becomes much easier; the targeting system still needs a lot of practice to master, but it feels more coherent when you can see more of the play in front of you.

The iPad version features a very cool split screen mode too that allows two people to easily play against each other, and it's probably this feature that will sell the game more than any other. This is well worth patience and practice so you can annihilate your mates and even those with a passing knowledge of the sport will find it very easy to get into. Well worth checking out.

Rating ★★★★★





■ Is it the shoes?" Big Head mode returns for more comical antics, alongside brand new extras.

■ "You bring the peanut butter, I'll bring the jam!". Tim Kitzroy's ad-hoc commentary never fails.

Price: £4.99/$6.99 **Developer:** Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

NBA JAM by EA SPORTS

Still on fire after all these years

Back before phones barely had the technology to manage a call, and mobile gaming meant getting a bus to the nearest arcade, an unusual sports title was quickly becoming a smash hit. NBA Jam brought something new with its fast-paced action, over-the-top manoeuvres and hilarious commentator.

Now on the iPhone, the new version seeks to relive that charm with the same mix of caricaturised players and frenetic action. And it does, in every possible way.

There are a number of abilities available. For example, block is used with a tap of the left button, yet hold down the central run button and swipe left, and your player will push their opponents. While this can be cumbersome at first, the controls eventually become second nature.

With 36 matches in each division, not to mention unlockable characters, basketballs and special modes, there's plenty here. NBA Jam manages to bring the playability and joy of the original into a neat and stylish package.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: Free **Developer:** Wang Yujin

Finger Basketball

A disappointing waste of an idea



Finger Basketball on the iPhone should be a sure thing. If it merely mimicked the ideas incorporated by Paper Toss, the fact that you're throwing a basketball into a net may even make it more appealing. Instead, Bluesky's app is difficult to control. With a ball at the bottom and a net at the top, you have to flick the ball up with a finger and use the walls to try and get it through the hoop. It never feels like you have any authority over the ball, making this a pretty much useless basketball game.



■ Boring to look at, boring to play. This is not the iPhone's finest hour.

Rating ★★★★★

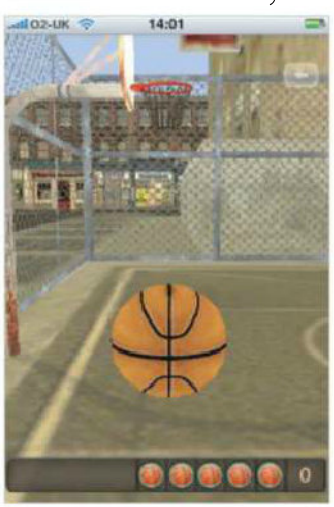
Price: Free **Developer:** SGN

iBasketball

From the makers of iBowl



For those who want a quick review of iBasketball, quickly turn your attention to the Finger Basketball verdict elsewhere on this page. All SGN's app had to do was allow you to flick the basketball with your finger to be somewhat of a success. Instead, it asks you to hold your iPhone/iPod vertically, shove it up in the air and hope it goes somewhere in the right direction. It feels awkward, isn't fun and fails to be rewarding on any level. In other words, don't bother.



■ Horrible to control and to play. Even something that's free isn't worth that.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £1.99/$2.99
Developer: Freeverse, Inc

Flick Bowling

First of all we should make it clear that you don't 'flick' the ball down the lane, you slide it. There's no variety on the lane itself and the six playable characters on offer vary only in appearance, not styles or stats. In other words any appearance of variety is an illusion. Besides all of this, Flick Bowling is a damn good blast that boasts some of the sharpest visuals seen in a game of this type. The control system works well and you can even apply some spin to your ball by curving your slide. It works well enough that we're willing to let the accuracy of the game slide too. Definitely one of the better bowling games out there, but it's hamstrung by a lack of options that would otherwise have put this app far closer to being essential.

Rating ★★★☆☆



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Skyworks Interactive, Inc

Arcade Bowling

This game has been doing the rounds on the DS and was designed by the legendary David Crane. So its credentials are good, but what of the game itself? Not a conventional bowling game, the idea is that you fling balls down the alley and score points by making them land in different zones. Basically what we're looking at here is Skee Ball, which is something anyone who has spent time in an amusement arcade will instantly recognise and understand. You can tilt the phone to influence the speed and direction of the ball, so there is much to master here, and the presentation is flawless, with sharp visuals and an exhilarating soundtrack. Throw in some global scoreboards and you have a small competitive reason to come back too.

Rating ★★★★½



Price: £1.99/$2.99
Developer: GameResort LLC

Downhill Bowling

This app presents a novel twist on conventional bowling. Using accelerator technology, you tilt your phone to guide the ball down a hill, collecting tokens and knocking down pins along the way. Added spice comes in the form of power-ups and ramps, and each run ends with a bonus rack of pins that you have to knock down in an imaginative way. It's packed with variety and has that 'one more game' factor that'll have you battling to beat your best score well into the night. Unfortunately it doesn't hold together tight enough to give it a lasting presence. While fun for a while you may well begin to lose interest in it and move on to other things. As bowling games go, it's one of the better examples, but really nowhere near being the best.

Rating ★★★★½



Price: £2.49/$3.99
Developer: Full Fat Productions Ltd

Flick Golf Extreme! HD

Taking golf to new extremes, this is a fun and functional spin on the sport. The first course sees your player taking shots from a helicopter, trying to hit targets on the deck of an aircraft carrier. If that doesn't tell you heaps about the attitude of this game towards the sport upon which it is based then nothing will. Flicking the screen takes the shot, and once in the air you can swipe again to curve and spin the ball towards the target. It's a neat, accurate control scheme that lets you fight against the ever-changing wind direction. Also, the range of extreme courses is superb, and the visuals are outstanding. When it comes to quick pick up and play golfing games that are all about instant fun, this is one of the best.

Rating ★★★★½



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: NaturalMotion

Backbreaker Football

A companion to the console versions of Backbreaker, the aim is to score as many touchdowns as possible using the tilt functions to avoid defenders. The closer to the centre of the End Zone you hit, the more points you get. On your way through you can duck and dodge to avoid wave after wave of oncoming defenders. Awesome visuals, superb animation and responsive controls make this great app a real winner on iPhone and iPad. However, the release of a sequel does mean that this version is somewhat redundent now. That it's cheap on iPad than the follow up may be the only incentive you need to pick this one up instead. Either way you go, you won't regret the purchase because this series is a lot of fun.

Rating ★★★★½



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Gamerizon

Chop Chop Hockey

Chop Chop Hockey's genius comes in its simplicity. All you have to do is tap the screen to make a player pass while in offense, or tap to tackle opponents if you are playing as defence. The key to winning is in keeping your eye on space for passing and advancing. Essentially, it breaks down the game of Ice Hockey, which is well known for its difficult to digest rules, to a manageable level on the iOS touchscreen format. This simple approach to scoring and defending makes it an easy game to grab a play for a few minutes without having to worry about what the hell Icing is all about or why you player just got chucked in the sin bin. You can just think about hitting the back of the net or protecting it.

Rating ★★★★½



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Alexander Nedoma

Doodle Tennis

Pong has seen multiple iterations throughout the years, and here's yet another one to add to the pile. You control your character by sliding it across the base to deflect the tennis ball back and forth, although it's seemingly impossible to manage this with any degree of skill. Due to the inordinately large size of the ball and characters, in fact, it's rare that you'll ever even score a single point, effectively meaning that the best you can hope for is a ten minute rally. While in any other situation where that was down to skill or really high quality AI, this gets tiresome very quickly. As such the rather simple formula of Pong, which translated tennis to videogame form so many years ago, is miraculously ruined. It's almost difficult to believe such a thing is possible.

Rating ★☆☆☆☆



Price: Free
Developer: Machineworks Northwest LLC

3D Hunting Alaskan Hunt Plus!

This hunting simulation fails to employ any of the iPad's strengths, combining poor visuals, terrible controls and bad collision detection. Bullets sprayed in the direction of a running buck, for example, can yield no kills, while a shot to the foot can prove lethal. Though there are additional hunting aids given as the game progresses, the fourth wall will have been broken far too many times for most gamers to care by that point and when you consider the wealth of hunting related gaming that's on offer out there, it's hard to imagine why you would plump for this release over some of the better established apps out there.

Rating ★★☆☆☆



Price: £1.49/$1.99
Developer: Pascal Inc

Fly Fishing 3D



Fly Fishing 3D is very true to the process of standing next to a river for hours on end. Maybe we're being harsh, and anglers will likely get more enjoyment from it, but from the perspective of players who want an enjoyable way to pass a few minutes with a game on the iPhone, it's just very dull. The developer has at least made it look decent, however, and the controls seem to simulate the motion of a fishing rod well. It's just for this format and for the way many of us like to play games on the iPhone it simply isn't quick enough about delivering the thrills. Could be one for fishing stalwarts, then, but we can't recommend it over the competition, which on the whole has translated this sport into bite-size chunks with far greater levels of satisfaction.

Rating ★★★☆☆



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Super Happy Fun Fun, Inc

Field & Stream Fishing



Carrying the licence for the renowned fishing and hunting magazine, you'd expect this game to meet some high standards of realism, and it does so. While more locales would have been nice, the visuals are superb, creating very high levels of detail both on the fish and in the environment around them. The actual fishing mechanics are equally good, drawing you into the sport in a easy to understand way that still manages to offer enough challenge to make it all worthwhile. Integration with one of the popular iPhone gaming networks is all that's really missing from an otherwise recommended package so you could share your achievements with friends and compare your performance.

Rating ★★★★☆



Price: £1.99/$2.99
Developer: Chris Egerter

i Fishing



We liked Doodle Fishing, but its hand-drawn visuals could put off some. Enter i Fishing, which is essentially the same game but with a more realistic approach to its looks. In gameplay terms it's identical, and therefore if you enjoy one you're going to enjoy the other. You cast off using accelerometer controls, move around the world in a little boat and, most importantly, you still catch fish. That said, though, it is a relatively straight-faced depiction of fishing, and for those without any investment in angling as a hobby, it does lose a touch of the entertainment value boasted by Doodle Fishing. Solid enough, then, but another one that's more suited to fishing fans, especially next to its stablemate, which manages to deliver the same game, but with a little more joy.

Rating ★★★☆☆



Price: £1.49/$1.99
Developer: HeavyLifters Newtork Ltd

Monkey Bowl – Family Bowling Fun In The Jungle



Aside from the name, this app doesn't really have much going for it. You simply select a monkey ball, use an on-screen dial to determine your direction, then you hold down the 'Throw' button and motion your hand as if throwing a real bowling ball. Your ball will then fly off down the jungle-themed aisles and knock down banana pins. The control method is decent enough, but there just isn't enough here to warrant a full purchase. It's theme is pleasant and colourful, but there's not enough variation in how it plays to keep you coming back for more. Just check out the 'Lite' version, play a frame or two and you're done.

Rating ★★★☆☆



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Gameloft S.A

Midnight Bowling



Whereas most of the games in this roundup serve as simple, pick-up-and-play apps, Midnight Bowling is the standout app that feels like a proper game. Graphically it's sharp and eye-meltingly vibrant, and the control system it utilises works well, relying on a stop/start power bar as opposed to accelerator technology. The game's also packed with modes, which you can progress through to unlock a host of bonuses. Because of the more traditional, gaming control setup it's the kind of bowling game that won't necessarily be very intuitive, but it does have enough depth to make it rewarding to master. Definitely one of the most well-rounded bowlers out there.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: Free
Developer: oncrete Software, Inc

PBA® Bowling Spare Challenge



This app takes bowling to the next level by presenting you with a series of tricky spares that you must attempt to knock down using three different weights of ball and a tilt-and-flick control method. Since spares are the toughest pins to pick up you know from the start this is going to be difficult. Aiming is tricky as the controls are sensitive, and you have to 'flick' your ball without accidentally applying spin, but once mastered the app becomes one of the most sophisticated and challenging out there. That's all the more impressive when you consider that the premise is an incredibly simple one. Throw in the fact that it won't cost you a dime and you have a pretty irresistible package.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: Free
Developer: Kiloo

Frisbee Forever



Frisbee Forever tasks players with guiding a frisbee through targets and around obstacles. Ten environments are included, each with ten levels of varying difficulty. Controls take the form of either tapping to steer or tilting via the accelerometer. Whichever you choose you will be whizzing through the air in seconds. The height of your frisbee is determined by the amount of stars you collect, miss more than a couple and the frisbee will fall to the earth. It's a nice simple mechanic that is very easy to get into and as such you'll keep coming back to this game plenty once you've downloaded it. Once again, for a free app it delivers where it counts, with its gameplay and smart controls, which makes up for any lack of variety you may feel it has.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: Free
Developer: Rock

Mike Tyson – Main Event



Some nice visuals sadly can't save Iron Mike's first gaming event in years from feeling like a letdown, relying on the former world champion's name to bring in the punters while not packing much punch. With obvious comparisons to the classic Super Punch Out!!, your no-name pugilist moves through assorted national stereotypes and knowing clichés for a shot at Tyson himself. It's fun for a little while, but it feels cheap and unpolished, from the poor sound to spelling mistakes. Given that it is inspired by something of a gaming classic, the sense that this could have been so much more only compounds the disappointment we felt with this game. This was a really badly missed opportunity.

Rating ★★☆☆☆



Price: £1.99/$2.99
Developer: RESET

Vegas Pool Sharks HD

It's not directly tied in to what happens in the world of Vegas, but pool is a fine way to beat the banker in terms of cash. With pool tables adorning many a casino, you can easily learn to be a hustler. Vegas Pool Sharks HD tries to make it more interesting by making your opponents angry gamblers from the local casino. The mechanics are much as you would expect from a pool game on a touch screen and hold up rather well. It's no the best of its type though. You can choose the style of pool you want to play though, and we advise using it as a nice break between stiffer Vegas fair in order not to lose too much green on the tables. Either that or just find yourself something similar that packs a little more punch.

Rating ★★★☆☆



Price: £1.99/$2.99
Developer: Exient Ltd

X2 Snowboarding

This fully-featured, deep snowboarding game, is a commendable effort that has just about every base covered. Or whatever metaphor is appropriate. Featuring six courses, a range of upgrades and an innovative trick system demanding players flick the screen to physically rotate their 'boarder in mid-air, it's not long before addiction reigns. In fact, if it wasn't for the fact that all characters' voices seem to have been recorded by one annoying British bloke, we'd be breaking out the five-star award. As it is the gameplay is very solid, easy to get into and keeps delivering thrills. The only thing that holds it back is that looming sense that corners were cut in places, which is something the voice acting hints at. It means that you feel as if a better game could have been there.

Rating ★★★★☆



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Tower Studios

Speedball 2 Evolution

Speedball has always seemed the sports video-game for people who don't quite understand the real thing. And by real thing we mean real sports generally. With labyrinthine rules, brutal tackles and minimal subtlety, it's almost the perfect caricature of the likes of American Football. Built with more primitive controls in mind, it proves surprisingly competent. Still, there's an immediacy of control this conversion lacks through both input methods that slick presentation can't paper over. For all that this translation to touch screen is impressive, it remains imperfect. Still, there's some fun to be had here and whether you've played Speedball before or not really shouldn't effect your level of enjoyment. It remains a blast as ever.

Rating ★★★☆☆



Price: Free
Developer: Dodzilab

StarDunk

The concept of StarDunk is extremely simple: set a trajectory to throw a ball through a hoop, with bonuses for rebounding it in off a nearby wall, all with a flashy outer space theme. What's clever, however, is its billing as a 'massively multiplayer online basketball' game, as every time you play you'll be pitted against all the other people who are playing at the same time, with their high scores popping up in the background as you play. That's exactly the kind of extra incentive and interactive quality that will keep you coming back for more and considering this is a free app, that's doubly impressive. It's also impressive how seamlessly it works, never interfering with your game time or distracting you from improving your performance over time.

Rating ★★★★☆



Price: £2.99/$4.99
Developer: Gameloft S.A.

Real Tennis HD

Real Tennis HD enables a surprising level of custom control for such a small game. Using the d-pad you can hit spin, lobs and drop shots, as well as blistering serves. That's a level of complexity to your shot choices we see all too rarely on iPhone and iPad. The visuals are razor sharp too, delivering a colourful palette similar to Virtua Tennis on consoles. Players can enjoy single or doubles careers, or play exhibition matches to warm up. Again, that's a selection of game types that impresses and thanks to the controls they're actually worth getting into. Multiplayer also allows for Wi-Fi battles with friends who also have the game, making this a good effort and a worthy addition to your device, especially if you've long been a fan of tennis games.

Rating ★★★★☆



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Glu Games Inc

SUPER KO BOXING 2

Back before games consoles had the power to accurately recreate sports, developers came up with some genuinely entertaining ways to make digital boxing fun. Perhaps the most notable of these was SNES classic Super Punch Out!, which Super KO Boxing 2 is very similar to. It's more a puzzle game or a memory test than a fighter, but lightning fast reactions are still the key to victory. Each opponent has a set bag of tricks and moves that you need to get used to and react to in order to win. Wait for your opening and then sock it to them when their guard is down. Don't expect an easy ride, though; opponents are tough, presumably intentionally so and getting to the end will be a fight all the way.

Rating ★★★★☆



Price: Free
Developer: Stick

Stick Cricket

The rules are simple. You use two buttons to decide which direction to hit the on-coming cricket ball. Timing is key, get it wrong (and you will, many times), and the ball will scuttle along the floor or float up into the air for an easy catch. Get it right though and you'll be hitting that ball for fours and sixes in no time. It's totally addictive, and when played against another player over Wi-Fi or Bluetooth is a great social app. Unfortunately, however, Stick Cricket does have a few downsides. The game doesn't support Retina Display, and the animation isn't exactly stellar. It holds firm to its sticky name in its looks and if that's the difference between us having a free app and having to pay for it, we'll accept it. Regardless, it's hard to put down.

Rating ★★★☆☆



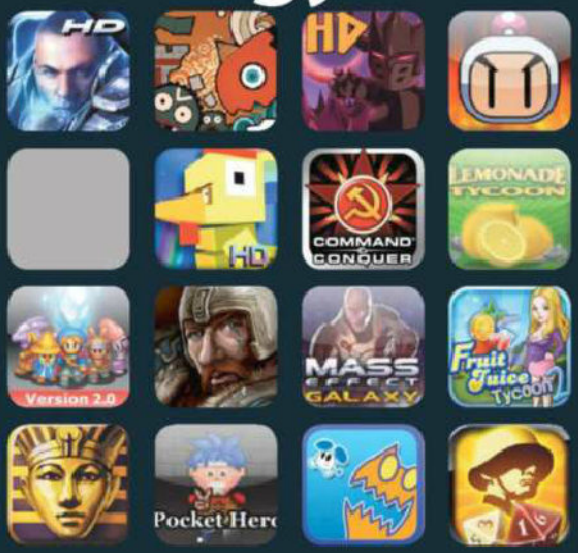
Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Neon Play Ltd

Pro Tennis Volley

If the passing summer of tennis has put you in the mood for a sim, then please don't be tempted to get this one. Controlled with your finger constantly on the touchscreen, Pro Tennis Volley gives you instantaneous control over the racquet and the freedom to move it wherever you like. This all sounds good, but it's really not all that intuitive to use. Attempting to hit an object in a 3D environment when you only have 2D control is a challenge that you're given very little incentive to master. This game just doesn't have the depth or variety to justify repeat games so once you've played around with it for a short while you're unlikely to want to return. It's not the worst looking game though and can be diverting for a short while, but just can't compete long term.

Rating ★★☆☆☆

Strategy/RPG



Taking you to magical worlds of wizards, warriors and perhaps even some werewolves, RPGs put you in the shoes of heroes. Strategy games on the other hand task you with being a commander. Big boots to fill.

Top Paid Apps	Top Free Apps
Final Fantasy Tactics: The War Of The Lions ★★★★★	TapDefense ★★★★★
Fantastic Knight ★★★★★	Colosseum ★★★★½
Transformers G1: Awakening ★★★★★	Tap Reef HD ★★★½☆

Staff pick of the section

Flight Control HD ★★★★½	Worms HD ★★★★½



Team up with other characters to vanquish the undead.

Price: Free **Developer:** Backflip Studios Inc

Army of Darkness

It's The Evil Dead mixed with castle defence gameplay!



Fan of the Evil Dead films? If so, you'll get a real kick out of this game. It's loosely based on the Evil Dead universe, and sees Ash Williams battle hordes of the undead with a variety of weapons.

This is a castle defence game with a side-on view. That means the majority of the gameplay sees you dash forward as far as possible before retreating tug-of-war style while firing at the undead. If they manage to reach the entrance of the castle, then it's game over.

Ash can call upon a selection of characters to help him battle the hordes. These include swordsmen, archers, and knights on horseback. The graphics are rendered beautifully, with 2D backgrounds and 3D characters that have an attractive, cartoon appearance. You'll tire of seeing the same castle environment, however, and the music gets repetitive too. If there's one boon in the presentation it's the 100 audio clips taken from the movies – they add a real sense of authenticity to the game.

Rating ★★★½☆

Price: £4.99/$6.99 **Developer:** Gameloft S.A.

StarFront: Collision HD

Want StarCraft for your iPad? Step this way

The real time strategy genre is one that's perfectly suited to the huge display and touch controls of the iPad screen, and Gameloft takes advantage of both those features in StarFront. Selecting, moving and commanding troops is a doddle thanks to common-sense functions like the two-finger selection box that changes in size depending on the distance between your two fingertips, and the context-sensitive menu that sits at the foot of the screen and displays different buttons depending on what you've selected, ensuring the screen doesn't get cluttered with unnecessary controls. It handles complex moves with ease.

It's a good thing that the controls are simple, because the game that's running underneath is pretty complex. With tons of different units to control out in battle, and a base full of industrial buildings to maintain at the same time, this is a game with a lot to learn and remember. The average stage has you doing lots of jobs all at the same time, and only throws in more responsibilities and challenges as you delve deeper. If StarFront had been poorly designed then it could have easily become an overwhelming mess, but the concise, clear tutorials and gently paced opening levels of the campaign do a great job of easing you in so that you can play with confidence by the time the difficulty ramps up. Playing a real time strategy game can sometimes feel like spinning plates, and StarFront's design acknowledges this with functions like its touch-controlled mini-map that allows you to instantly move to any part of the vast battlefield, or the pop-up menu that lets you switch between your own custom groupings of troops, to make it as comfortable as possible to play the game without any awkward fiddling about.

In addition to these positive features, StarFront also boasts a generous amount of content. There's not just one but three lengthy campaigns, each played from different perspectives and different types of troop. There's a great four-player competitive mode that works either locally between multiple iPads or on Gameloft's online service. And even when you're through with all of that, you can extend the life of the game by customising battles in the skirmish mode. There really is a vast amount of content here that more than justifies the £3.99 price tag.

It may be an unimaginative clone of someone else's game but, even so, StarFront is by far the best example of the genre currently available for iPad. Even compared to more established brands, like Command & Conquer: Red Alert, StarFront stands out, largely thanks to the fact that its intuitive touch controls wipe the floor with those of its competitors. If you're a real time strategy fan, then you can't really go wrong with StarFront: Collision HD, at least until the unlikely point at which Blizzard's StarCraft appears on the App Store, anyway. In other words go grab it now.

Rating ★★★★½



Some of the enemies can seem pretty threatening, but you can usually deal with them simply by producing more troops.



StarFront's impressive graphics start to break up a little when the camera zooms in for cut-scenes, but it usually looks great in the zoomed-out battles.

iPhone & iPad | Strategy/RPG

Price: £4.99/$6.99 **Developer:** Gameloft S.A.

Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Shadow Vanguard

Cut-down console sneak 'em up

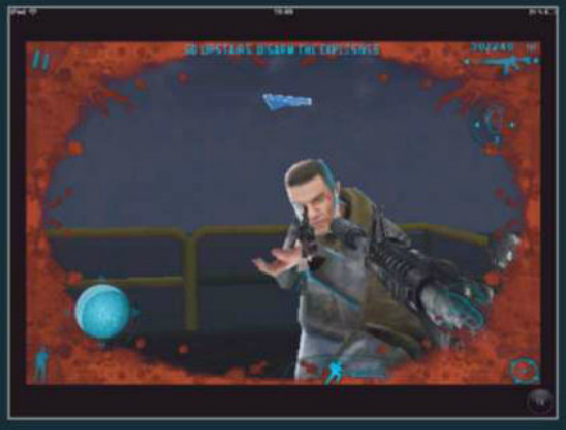
Rainbow Six lends itself rather well to the iDevice formats. While it's got all the attractive appearances of a first person shooter, there's much less demand on the player to make quick motion-based manoeuvres with the touchscreen, as Rainbow Six is far more about man-management than it is about running in with all guns blazing.

Taking its cue from the more recent console versions, Shadow Vanguard sees you in charge of two computer-controlled allies. The way they're ordered around the environment is, if anything, an improvement on the console original, as surfaces are emblazoned with green icons, with just a quick touch of these emblems required to send your buddies towards them to await the next order.

At its most plain, the icons just tell your men to wait around the corner, but stick a door in the way (as it often does), and several more possibilities open up. As your team waits, you can take a look under the door, mark anybody standing behind it, then burst the door open and kill the baddies on the other side.

Shadow Vanguard's globe-trotting and unique environments (based on the original Rainbow Six) are fun and diverting places to hang out, with each mission taking no longer than ten minutes or so to bust through.

Rating ★★★★★



Although more of a tactical game, it's still a fine shooter.



All the great action typical of Tom Clancy games is here even in this small package. It keeps delivering the thrills.





This game is more about considered man management than running in all guns blazing and works well on the touch screen.

Blade Warrior

Price: £1.99/$2.99 **Developer:** JiWei Zhu

Master the blade, save the world!



Enemies attack the door. You kill enemies. Over and over again.



There are plenty of apps that boast incredible presentation values, but not much underneath. Blade Warrior straddles this idea almost perfectly.

From the off, you can tell that a lot of care has gone into it, as every aspect looks mesmerising, while an appropriately epic score provides the energy necessary to promote that big game feel. When you actually get into it, however, it doesn't match the build up. As minions attack one of your many structures, it's up to you to draw symbols on-screen to fight back. Basic attacks are done with a swipe, while manoeuvres can be activated by sketching a far more elaborate symbol.

Your arsenal can be enhanced by unlocking extra shapes, but the process of stopping the action, squiggling on your screen and repeating isn't that entertaining.

There's not a great deal extra that could have been done given the mechanics, but it's hard to go through the same ordeal over and over. The idea is still sound, though, and it works as a way to pass five minutes. It could have been something more though.

Rating ★★☆☆☆

Price: £1.99/$2.99 **Developer:** Celestial Digital

Avatar Of War HD: The Dark Lord

Or: when a tower defence game isn't a tower defence game



Avatar Of War gives gamers control over a band of generic medieval warriors tasked with defending their castle from fireball-tossing mummies. Gameplay here focuses upon an interesting mix of traditional tower defence and something more immediate, allowing players access to a cannon controlled in real time.

A 'hero' character adds further layers of depth, as players desperately attempt to keep the handsome fellow alive in an attempt to gain from the powers he imbues his underlings with through his presence alone. Ultimately though, the experience is more akin to being a firefighter, lacking Pop Cap's tactical balance or the gravitational satisfaction of Angry Birds.

Regardless of how well-rounded the artwork is, or how thorough the characterisation, this isn't enough without the chance to metaphorically stand back and admire a job well done.



Campaign progress is indicated by this map.

Rating ★★★☆☆

Price: £2.99/$4.99 Developer: Handcrafted Web Solutions

Bomberman Touch

A classic explodes on to iPhone



If you haven't heard of Bomberman, then you seriously need to get with it. This game has been around since 1985 and has appeared on almost every console imaginable. Your objective as Bomberman is simple: use your bomb-laying skills to negotiate levels, destroying rocks and enemies as you go. Sadly, the iPhone version is single-player only, and as long-time Bomberman fans will know, the multiplayer mayhem is what it's all about, as you enjoy endless fun incinerating your friends. Despite this pretty major flaw, the gameplay is easy, the levels are fun and the graphics are good. It's just a shame that this could have been so much better. Let's hope Hudson finds a way to get a multiplayer option into this classic game so we can all get together and bomb the bejesus out of each other. A reasonable first effort for porting Bomberman to iPhone, but there's a long way to go before this game reaches the sublime quality of GameCube's Bomberman Generation.







This cult classic provides hours of addictive gameplay and is a good first effort for an iPhone port.

Rating ★★★☆☆

Price: £1.99/$2.99 Developer: GAMEVIL USA, Inc

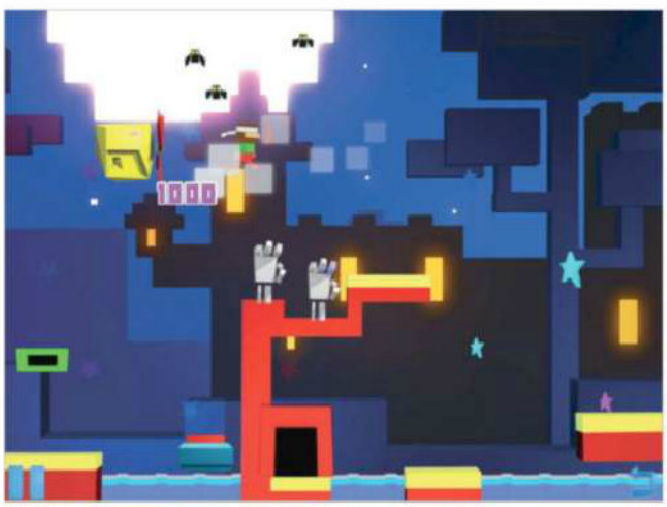
Kami Retro HD

Lemming-scented action



Somewhere between Lemmings and Super Mario Bros sits this offering from Gamevil. It resembles the former in how you must guide a group of brainless automatons, only capable of walking in a straight line to certain death without your prompting, from their trap door to the exit.

It's certainly not a traditional platform game, though it does hearken back to the good old days in the way that everything seems built from blocks designed to look like pixels. All but the simplest levels require some thought before you start your charges on their march, requiring you to lay out springs, fans and more to provide a way past otherwise insurmountable obstacles. Done correctly, it will only take a few swipes to guide them through, but it gets harder as the levels become more convoluted, the solutions less obvious, and the time between your men shorter.





Although the levels are themed, the differences between them aren't more than skin deep.

Fans give your chaps a boost, making it possible to pass chasms.

Rating ★★★☆☆



The visuals have been greatly enhanced via the iPad, while the larger playing area helps make the game even more addictive.



Only moments ago this was a finely ordered procession of aircraft. Now it's possibly the worst disaster in aviation history.

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Firemint Pty Ltd

Flight Control HD

A game that demonstrates how quickly order can turn to chaos!

Every fancied playing an Air Traffic Controller sim? Chances are you answered no, but then try and explain how the original Flight Control game quickly became one of the biggest sellers for the iPhone. The answer is simple, it's a strategy game that, as with all the best strategy games, takes moments to learn but a lifetime to master.

The gameplay is simple. Coloured aircraft appear on the screen and you have to guide them to matching coloured runways. Setting a flight path is as easy as dragging your finger from the plane (or helicopter) to the runway. The tricky part is that different aircraft travel at different speeds, so trying to draw the path so that nobody crashes soon becomes an art.

The true genius of the game is just how quickly your ordered flight plan degrades into a chaotic shamble, new aircraft appear at a rate of knots, your frantic redrawing of paths only adds to the mess and before long everything grinds to a crashing halt.

The iPad gets three new maps that take advantage of the larger screen and the iPhone maps have been upgraded so that they fit the device without any loss of quality. The original maps do feel a little chunky once you're used to the space afforded by the iPad exclusives, but it's a bonus to have them included as you get a really full experience on every device.



It's great to see the original iPhone levels included, but they do look a little chunky on the larger screen.

Once you've honed your skills playing the single-player game there's a handful of multiplayer modes to try. Connecting over Wi-Fi or Bluetooth, you can even play multiplayer games against a friend who has the iPhone version. If you're limited to the one iPad you can still face-off over two split-screen modes that take advantage of larger maps. The co-op mode has you trying to steer clear of each other's aircraft while directing your own to your airport. Bored of playing nicely? Try capturing your opponents aircraft in the 'Versus' mode to up the stakes.

This is a great example of the best kind of iPad game. You can dip in and out when you have a couple of minutes spare, but you'll be hopelessly addicted to a Air Traffic Controller sim.

Rating ★★★★½

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Glu Games Inc

Transformers G1: Awakening

More than just fan service



With good Transformers games being thin on the ground, the signs weren't good for Transformers G1: Awakening. Put aside what you might expect, though, and you'll find that Glu Games has done a remarkable job of translating the old-school Transformers – none of that Michael Bay nonsense here – into a highly capable turn-based strategy game.

Being based on a 2008 mobile game, the gameplay is simple, and anyone familiar with Nintendo's Advance Wars series will know what's what: both factions take it in turns to move their troops around a grid-based map and attack the enemy or capture resources. Different units have different abilities, but while Advance Wars differentiated its unit as tanks, infantry, bombers and the like, Awakening's are all familiar characters from the Eighties cartoon.

It does help to have at least some knowledge of the characters' abilities, as the game's roots on traditional mobile phones mean that there isn't much room for differentiation between them on the map screen. All of them look largely identical in terms of size, for example, despite characters like Metroplex being hundreds of times bigger than the basic Transformers, and his abilities in the game – he can only move one square at a time but is devastatingly powerful – reflect this. Each of them does have a rundown of their stats available, but it would have been useful to tell these things at a glance.

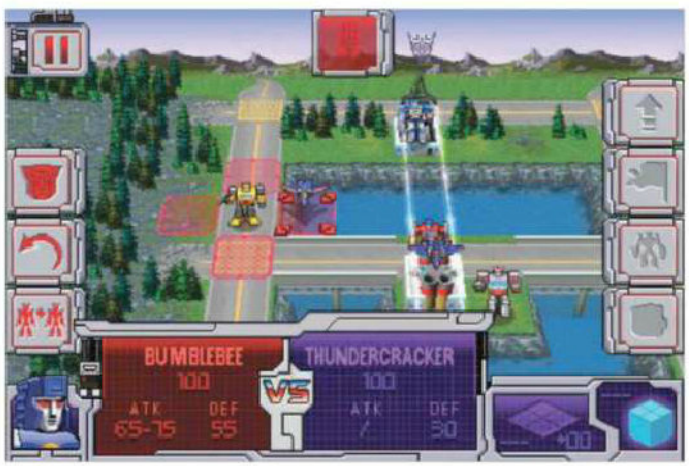
The iPhone's graphical horsepower is put to good use in the battles, where you'll be treated to panning shots of each Transformer's 3D character model. Fans will get a kick out of seeing their childhood heroes in such graphically sumptuous form.

Fan service aside, though, Awakening is an excellent strategy game, boasting several modes and superb presentation, and it's clearly been designed with phone-based gaming in mind, as missions rarely take more than ten minutes. It comes recommended if you're simply a fan of this type of strategy, and if you're a child of the Eighties, it becomes simply essential.

Rating ★★★★★



The game very loosely follows the plot of the cartoon, but it never gets in the way of letting big robots shoot each other.



Transforming your units into vehicle form lets them move further in a turn, but they're unable to attack or defend themselves until they change back.



The game's Showdown will do things like pit a single Autobot against the mighty Trypticon. We don't fancy Ironhide's odds here.



t's during battle that things start to get really complicated. Just hope that you've got a bigger army than them.

Price: £2.99/$4.99 Developer: Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

Command & Conquer: Red Alert

Excellent Command & Conquer conversion, comrade!

Although the iPhone Red Alert is a completely different game to its similarly titled 1996 PC forebear, the fact that it's up there with its big brothers shows just how far mobile gaming has come. It's one of the best-looking games on the iPhone, and in its largest battles it's a mind-blowing technical achievement.

It's not without issues, though. Real-time strategy is infamously difficult to adapt to anything without a keyboard and mouse, and genre fans are likely to find similar complaints here. While the touch screen is far better than a console controller, there's still a lot crammed into such a small screen, and in the heat of battle it can be hard to distinguish your units, let alone manipulate them with any great precision.

Still, kudos to EA for a good crack at adapting Red Alert to the iPhone. It's hard to see how it could have done any better and in many ways it was very successful.

Rating ★★★★★



Improve your recipes to make more money and satisfy customers.

Price: £1.49/$1.99 Developer: Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

Lemonade Tycoon

If life gives you lemons, make lemonade. If it gives you an iPhone, play this

EA has brought some great simulations to iPhone – including Sim City and The Sims – but the classic Lemonade Tycoon is a real gem. Styled with retro pixel-art graphics and an easy-to-use push-button interface, the game is all about building the ultimate soft-drink empire. The manager of your own lemonade-vending franchise, you must you buy in the stock and watch the cash roll in… or not, if you make the wrong purchasing decisions. As you develop your empire you can build more locations and upgrade your recipes in order to make more money. You are also involved in staff recruitment and advertising in order to ensure your lemonade business thrives. There are a number of game types to play depending on the time and dedication you have, but regardless of the option you choose, there's plenty of juice to squeeze from Lemonade Tycoon and a great deal to enjoy the more time you invest in it. It's a nice simple premise pulled off with style.

Rating ★★★★★

Crystal Defenders

Price: £5.49/$7.99 **Developer:** Square Enix Co., Ltd

Square Enix tower defence? Just a fantasy, surely?



Taking a popular genre for iPhone games like tower defence and blending it with the art styles, job system and characters of Square Enix RPGs like Final Fantasy seems like a great match, and it generally is. Players of Crystal Defenders must protect a hoard of crystals against waves of varied fantasy enemies, all with different attributes and immunities, by placing your own army of warriors, black mages and the like along the path.

So far so familiar, but it's improved by its wonderful graphics, which use 16-bit sprites that players of RPGs from the early to mid-Nineties will immediately be familiar with. They're somewhat limited when it comes to animation but they've got bags of charm, regardless of whether you're a fan of Square Enix or its games.

There are better tower defence games, but Final Fantasy fans will love this, and there's plenty to like otherwise.

Rating ★★★★★



One crystal left and a single mage between it and this many

Spore Origins

Price: £1.49/$1.99 **Developer:** Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.





Based on the highly successful PC game, Spore is right at home on smaller iPhone.

It's your chance to play God, but don't worry, its easy



Cute, entertaining, slick and engaging are just a few words to describe the lite version of Electronic Arts' Spore on iPhone. While you don't get to see your hand-crafted creature make it out of the primordial ooze, you'll still have a great time evolving it as you accrue more points, enabling you to add teeth, fins, and so on. Control is primarily via the accelerometer, with tilting enabling you to move your Spore around and eat or avoid others. When evolving your beast, you can use gestures to squeeze and pinch the creature into shape, and drag new items into its evolutionary arsenal. The promise of new upgrades and the chance to turn from hunted to hunter are more than enough reasons to come back to this game time and time again. This is well worth spending some time evolving with.

Rating ★★★★½

Price: £2.99/$4.99 **Developer:** Capybara Games Inc

Superbrothers: Sword & Sworcery EP

Delve into a magical adventure world



This is perhaps the most unusual adventure game available for iDevices, evoking a transcendent atmosphere that's trippy but engrossing.

Load up the game, and you won't find any instructions, nor text directing you. Instead, you're left to experiment with the on-screen icons; it took us a minute to actually start up the game.

When the game finally does begin, you'll discover a pixelated world filled with objects of interest and unique characters. The graphics have an Apple II era appearance that's basic on first appearance, but in fact packed with detail and life. Tap on a background bush, for example, and it squashes and rustles under your finger. Tap on a character, and they react with surprise. The games navigation controls are entirely touch-based. Tap on an area, and the protagonist will walk towards it. Tap and hold, and you can guide him in real time, steering around obstacles and scenery. On occasion an object can be manipulated by using the magic sword carried in the game character's backpack. To unleash the sword, you simply need to rotate the iPad into portrait mode, whereby he'll whip out the sword and a shield. This portrait mode is also used to battle various enemies encountered during the game. Some can be defeated by simply bashing at the sword and shield buttons, but later enemies require a pattern of moves before they fall at your feet.

Without spoiling the story, later in the game you'll be able to read characters' minds and sing songs to solve puzzles. Musician Jim Guthrie has crafted a wonderful soundtrack that fades in and out depending on the player's actions. We recommend wearing a pair of headphones to really appreciate the beauty of the soundtrack as it's so much stronger that way.

Before long, you'll find yourself totally engrossed in the world of Superbrothers. Exploring the mountains and woods is a totally unique experience, and laden with surprises. If you're looking for an engrossing, relaxing adventure game with a heavy fantasy vibe, make sure to grab this app as soon as possible because it won't disappoint in the least. This is a truly unique offering that you should definitely check out.

Rating ★★★★½



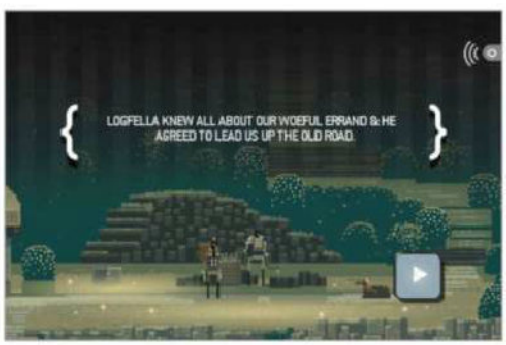
The graphics have a fantastic retro appeal.



The Megatome book enables you to read minds.



Dark caverns, dense woods and mountains await.



The storyline is revealed in third-person perspective.

iPhone & iPad | Strategy/RPG



FFT can be difficult, even early on. Stick with it, though, and it will become a rewarding experience.



Prepare to lose yourself in a wall of statistics, comparing swords and hats for their relative merits.



The job system is deep and engrossing, as well as wonderfully complex.



FFT plays out a bit like chess, with positioning and co-ordination paramount to success.

Price: £10.99/$14.99 **Developer:** Square Enix Co., Ltd

Final Fantasy Tactics: The War Of The Lions

A tactical RPG classic, worth every penny

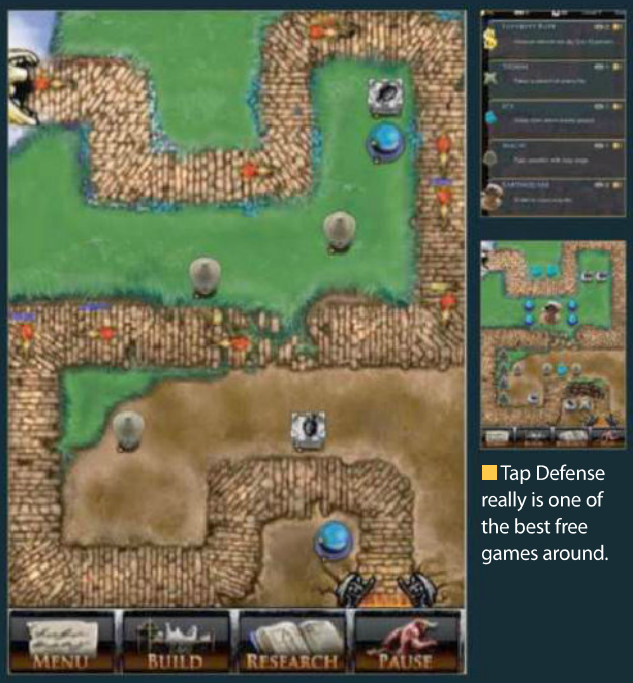
It may seem a bit cheeky of Square Enix to release a game that is pushing 15 years-old for this kind of price, and to be honest it sort of is. After all, you can get games with incredible depth – that will more than likely eat up weeks and months of your life – for a fraction of the cost of Final Fantasy Tactics. However, even bearing in mind the swathes of alternatives that exist, the fact remains that they are unlikely to be as good as this classic of the strategy RPG genre.

Starting out life on the PlayStation, before moving on over to the PlayStation Portable, FFT now finds itself updated with touchscreen controls and a few other tweaks for iOS devices. It's not a perfect translation, and problems with slowdown still persist at some points, but generally speaking this is everything you would want from a conversion. It controls easily, looks nice, and, most importantly, is very fun to play.

But we're sure not all of you are familiar with the FFT, so let's give you a basic overview. The game itself plays out a bit like chess – players choose the units that they want to go into battle with, then take it in turns to try and complete an objective (which usually involves eliminating all the enemy units). It's not as simple as just running in and repeatedly tapping the screen to win, though. This is a sedate, strategic game that involves thinking and forward-planning. Do you risk pushing your mage ahead, knowing that they can only take one or two blows before falling? Can you find higher ground on which to position your archer in order to increase their attack power? Should you rush headlong into battle, or stand back and await the enemy that is coming at you? Every single one of the hundreds of skirmishes that await has numerous choices like these to take into account.

FFT is deep, rewarding and fun, but it's not without its problems. The depth and complexity can harm the experience for newcomers. There's the aforementioned slowdown and price issues too, but they don't affect things too much for FFT to be anything other than highly recommended.

Rating ★★★★★



Tap Defense really is one of the best free games around.

Price: Free Developer: LL Group, LLC

Tap Defense

Classic tower defence comes to iPhone free of charge



This is one of the best free games on the App Store without a shadow of doubt. Well made, expansive and incredibly engaging, this is another game in the siege genre and sees you battling all manner of fantasy beasts. Using the familiar top-down view, you have to put up defences along the path that the enemy treads. There are several game modes and environment options, and the range of weapons you can use to defeat your foes is extremely cool indeed. As you would expect, the levels start off easy and then quickly become more frantic. Unusually, we really enjoyed the sounds in this game. The music was fitting and the sound effects equally so. We highly recommend this application and encourage all developers of free apps to follow in its footsteps and develop to a high standard. A brilliant game that you'll really enjoy attempting to complete.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £2.99/$4.99 Developer: Team17 Software Ltd

Worms HD

On the iPad, everybody wants to have worms



Worms was first released for the Amiga back in 1994, so for fans of retro gaming this will be as essential purchase for the iPad. Considering it's been 16 years, the gameplay hasn't changed a huge amount. You command a team of combat worms, highly trained in such diverse weapons as holy hand grenades, Banana Bombs and exploding sheep. Your mission, should you chose to accept it, is to defeat the other team of similarly trained worms, either controlled by the iPad or by your friends. There's no Wi-Fi or Bluetooth option, though, so you'll be passing the iPad back and forth among you. The gameplay is as good as it's ever been, which is fantastic, but the controls can take a little getting used to, even for seasoned players – there's no tutorial mode so you'll need to seek out the help pages from the main menu before you start playing.

Rating ★★★★½

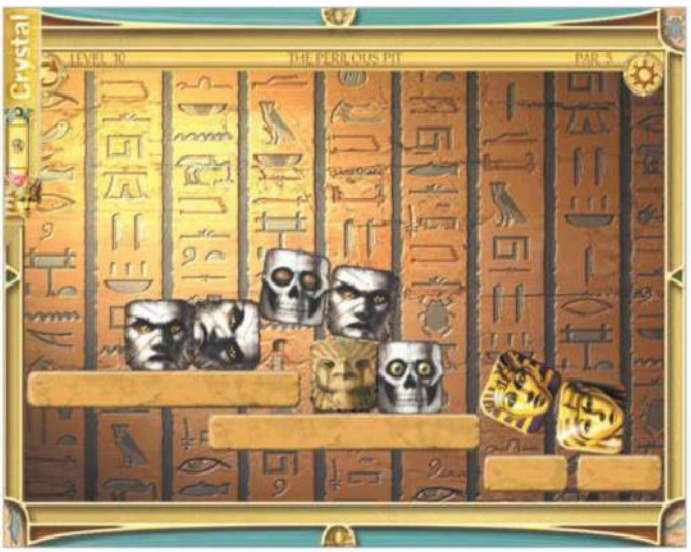


Worms' frantic action translates really well to the iPad screen.

Mummy's Treasure

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Chillingo Ltd

A jewel in the rough for physics-based puzzlers



Earlier puzzles ask that you topple towers to place the treasure on a platform.



Puzzlers of this ilk are ten-a-penny on the iPad and iPhone, each reworking that age-old standard of completing a goal by using the constant tug of gravity in a myriad of new and different ways.

The new and different way here is to discard the mummified cubes to leave only the treasure safely stationary on screen, using the weight of each object to knock others away. This may be managed by destroying sand platforms, throwing weaker stones aside to cause a tower to tumble, or simply dropping bricks on top of one another.

Earlier puzzles start off simple enough, asking that a block is removed in a specific order to relinquish the treasure. Later on, however, tasks become a little more difficult, requiring pinpoint precision or timing to ensure you hit your target.

You'll be scored for each level completed, depending on how many moves you've used under or above par, the time it took, and how many of the hidden gems have been found, so there's plenty of replayability here.

Rating ★★★★½

Fantastic Knight

Price: £1.99/$2.99 **Developer:** Minoraxis, Inc

Ignore the shoddy title; this is a full-featured and charming RPG



With almost everything you would expect from an epic Japanese-style role-playing game, Fantastic Knight feels like a phenomenal achievement just in terms of its sheer size and high presentation quality. However, it's also got the technical depth to ensure it stands up admirably for fans of the genre.

While none of it really moves much beyond 'kill x number of monsters' or 'go there and talk to them', there's some extremely sharp and often genuinely funny dialogue that keeps the various quests to far-flung towns, forests and deserts interesting.

Meanwhile, the state of play behind the scenes in the game's menus is just as impressive. A full levelling system supports customisable stats, unlockable offensive and passive powers. There's even a complex and wide-reaching weapon and item upgrade system that's supported by replayable challenge dungeons. There's so much to do here, and at a low price.





Developer Minorax often references other games.

Levelling up allows you to distribute the points you earned.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

Heroes Lore III: Stigmata Of Gaia

Keeping it incredibly old school



Forgive us if we're making some kind of heinous error, but it was our understanding that one of the biggest plus points of this new generation of touch-screen smartphones and tablets is their ability to attract folk who wouldn't previously have dared sample a videogame? To create a world in which newcomers could get to grips with a number of the medium's more basic gameplay concepts, with those of a little more experience digging around the edges to find traditional genres with the added charm of a touch screen. Such devices weren't, at least in our recollection, an excuse to throw ancient digital clichés to yet another naïve audience. Clearly though, with Heroes Lore sitting on a make-believe shelf for purchase, the mistake is all ours.



It takes about ten seconds for our hero's obvious love interest to appear. Sigh.

From its hackneyed, 'adolescent boy desperate to save the world' plot through self-referential dialogue that doesn't compensate for the rest of its script, this is an experience to avoid. That's before you stop to contemplate how unsuited the genre is to handheld play. After all, the combat and movement isn't even separated off into tactical and reaction based packages. No, the host of stereotypical furry critters and Easter Island head tribesmen you'll be fighting will feel the sharp end of your real-time sword. That is, if your virtual joystick and thumb, covering around a quarter of the screen, don't conspire to bring about failure. Certain puzzle elements, believe it or not, actually rely on an ability to move swiftly and accurately in all eight directions – something gamers are totally denied the opportunity to do.

On top of all this, a litany of other factors pop up to annoy that, while not technical errors, are archaic in the extreme. Enemies that reappear, for example, even in the time it takes to walk from one side of a forest segment to the other. Or travel quests – the life's work of many an RPG fan. In short, keep your role-playing to the living room, or in military dress at the local park. Or just buy the much better Puzzle Quest.

Rating ★★☆☆☆



Players will be pretty relieved to eventually move to more varied climes… filled with the same man-eating plants.



Each character boasts two primary attacks, which can be used in tandem to form rudimentary combos.

iPhone & iPad | Strategy/RPG

Price: £0.79/$0.99 Developer: Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

Mass Effect Galaxy

The least successful space mission since Apollo 13

The Mass Effect series is known to gamers for providing a deep and immersive role-playing experience, set in a fully realised universe with an insanely detailed back story and benchmark-setting visuals. Unfortunately, Mass Effect Galaxy can only be said to have one of those things, and it's just not enough.

What you get here is a side story that partly bridges the gap between the two main Mass Effect games and also introduces Jacob Taylor, a former soldier and a key character in Mass Effect 2. He's enjoying a spot of R&R aboard a cruise ship when it's attacked by Batarian pirates, throwing him into a conspiracy to attack the citadel, the centre of galactic politics and home to the most important people in the galaxy.

If that doesn't mean anything to you, you needn't bother with Mass Effect Galaxy at all. At its most basic level it's a top-down shoot-'em-up, but while other, similar games on the iPhone such as iDracula have some success in using the touch screen for virtual controls, this relies on tilt controls for your movement, with standard aiming and firing handled automatically. It doesn't feel nearly precise enough compared with its competitors.

Oddly, the game's much more effective between fights during the dialogue scenes, where, similar to the console games, you can choose whether to be the valiant hero or the malicious rogue through dialogue choices. It's well presented and fairly well written, and it even has limited voice-overs for important characters and animated cut-scenes.

Even for fans, Mass Effect Galaxy is tough to recommend. On top of the aforementioned design issues, it runs very poorly, slowing to an unresponsive crawl with more than a couple of enemies on screen when similar games manage to look much better without struggling at all. Even at its reasonably low asking price and with the promise that finishing the story – only a couple of hours' work – will unlock content for Mass Effect 2, it's one to avoid.

Rating ★★☆☆☆



The animated scenes and character art do at least look good.



The appearance of more than a couple of enemies on screen at once will cause the game to almost grind to a halt.



Controlling Jacob during action sequences is like controlling one of those old marble puzzles – the tilt control method is too imprecise.

Fruit Juice Tycoon 2

Price: £1.49/$1.99 **Developer:** Minoraxis, Inc

Enron look positively saintly in comparison





You'll need to travel around town to restock supplies, complete side quests, and more.

More health means you spend less time recuperating in bed.



We've never set up a lemonade stall, but we imagine it to be a harmless, character-building and endearing experience. Not so in Fruit Juice Tycoon 2. Here, the juice industry is defined by hostile takeovers, political backstabbings, dirty tricks and even kidnapping.

You play as John Apples, young heir to the Apple Juice Company, who's attempting to get his grandfather's business up and running before a shady corporation takes over.

It's the RPG elements that set this sequel apart, seeing you purchase stock, manage stalls and level up.

The business and micromanagement aspect can actually feel quite involving, but it's the simplicity and repetitiveness of these more 'gamey' elements that let it down. Ultimately, it feels like drinking budget lemonade when you could have the Schweppes-level of better management sims like Game Dev Story. It has some good ideas but they don't hold together well enough.

Rating ★★★★★

Age Of Heroes!

Price: Free **Developer:** MASQ Interactive Limited

There's nothing heroic about this game



The vast majority of MMORPGs we play on the iPhone feel like nothing less than a cynical attempt to part you from your money as quickly as possible. Age Of Heroes! is one such example, and while it offers slick presentation, a variety of different options and decent real-time (ish) combat, it's still a game we would find hard to recommend.

The big problem with Age Of Heroes! is that you can't really do anything without certain attributes (in this case, gold) and funnily enough, your limited supplies dwindle incredibly quickly. Now admittedly, you don't have to buy the bundles of gold that are available – your gold slowly recovers over time – but it takes so long to earn new gold that you'll have little choice if you want to make any progress online against other players.

Age Of Heroes! may look nice, but unless you want to part with oodles of your hard-earned cash, it's one to avoid.

Rating ★★★★★



Visually Age Of Heroes! is pretty impressive, with solid animation and well drawn sprites on show.



There are plenty of monsters to fight, but you're best off sticking with the weaklings to begin with.

iPhone & iPad | Strategy/RPG

Price: Free Developer: PlayMesh

Star Command II

Intergalactic domination with all the excitement sucked out



With a stylish interface, polished controls and a galaxy waiting for your foot to stamp on its face, what isn't there to love about Star Command II? Well, quite a bit. This is one of those MMO games, in the mould of Mafia and Vampire, where very little happens, but lots of people play it anyway. Here it's about galactic supremacy, though not by actually exploring space, forming colonies and engaging in thrilling battles. It's more like a card game where you build up your ship with weapons, crew and extra features. You then take on other commanders by selecting them in the war zone and clicking on Battle. The result is then announced and damage and/or rewards displayed. That's it. The server access is seamless and you can exchange real money for extra game credits to buy stuff. While the game offers some satisfaction in building up your rating, it isn't galactic exploration and it isn't very exciting either.

Rating ★★★★★





The main game interface is slickly presented with all the options accessible with just one tap on the sideways-scrolling screen.

Earn credits to hire crew, buy weapons, and exotic devices, then storm through the rankings.



Presentation throughout *iMafia* is extremely polished; it's just a shame the game's not up to the same standard.



You'll need certain weapons to go on specific quests, so be sure to upgrade weapons regularly.

Price: Free Developer: PlayMesh

iMafia

When a free game isn't a free game



The iMafia series has proven to be a massive success for PlayMesh and is now on its fourth iteration. In these essentially text-based MMOs, you're simply required to build up your characters stats by defeating other players and completing quests. This will grant you gold and experience that can be used to buy everything from weapons to buildings that bring in additional revenue.

Health, money and other stats are granted to you on a timed basis, while completing quests costs energy points that are in turn regained at a painfully slow rate. This can be counteracted by buying PlayMesh points that cost anything from 59 pence for five points to £59.99 for 800.

These points can then be used for everything from gaining money to refilling your energy bar, which gives you a slightly better chance of competing online but costs an absolute fortune.

Whether you're playing iMafia, iKnights, Vampires or any similar MMO, the end result is always the same. Save yourself some cash and stay well away from this one, much like you should all the others like it. You're time could be better spent.

Rating ★★☆☆☆



There are no Nazi references any more, but it's not hard to work out who this is.



With only a limited amount of health, you have to work out how best to take on this squadron of soldiers.

Price: £1.49/$1.99 Developer: Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

Wolfenstein RPG

Wolfenstein as you've never seen it before

As impressive as John Carmack's iPhone port of Wolfenstein 3D was, it was also rather fiddly to get to grips with. Fortunately, this isn't a problem for this new Wolfenstein game, and while the setting is instantly familiar, the gameplay itself is anything but.

Once again taking control of William 'BJ' Blazkowicz, you're imprisoned inside castle Wolfenstein and must find a way to escape the imposing fortress. Everything is now turn-based, however – which sounds like an insane thing to do with a FPS, but actually works amazingly well.

Navigation is extremely easy. A simple touch of the screen enables you to switch between different weapons, while stats and other skills can be increased as you gain experience. It's a great way of revitalising a classic series and is enhanced further by excellent visuals and a healthy dose of humour. Highly recommended, especially if you're after something a bit different from the usual RPG titles.

Rating ★★★★½

Price: £1.49/$1.99 Developer: Cory Leach

Pocket Hero

A master class in how to design an RPG for a phone

Far from being a traditional dungeon-crawling RPG, with a time requirement measured in weeks, Pocket Hero is designed to be dipped into as your time allows. The dungeons are randomly generated and can be played through in the space of a bus journey, and your hero can be customised to suit your style.





It deserves credit for considering the phone format in its design, and RPG fans should find it to their liking for such a low price.

Even items are generated randomly, adding to the variety.

Rating ★★★★½

Price: £1.49/$1.99 Developer: Zhang Yue

The Myth Of Heroes Legend

Close to being Dynasty Warriors on the iPhone

The Myth Of Heroes is a tactical RPG set in mythical China, pitting your squad of soldiers and mages against the massed armies of the enemy. While the game is turn-based, it's fast-paced to the point that it can almost be played like an action game, manoeuvring your troops around to pick off the enemy with breathtaking speed.



With detailed graphics, magic effects and an authentic soundtrack, the game will appeal to strategy fans.

Enemies get bigger, but as you level up, your characters get stronger.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £1.99/$2.99
Developer: Zhang Yue

European War 2 for iPad



European War 2 is all but an exact clone of the classic boardgame Risk. In it, you take turns attacking and defending territories across Europe, with a handful of unit types available. The battles are decided by dice rolls, where increased unit numbers are largely imperative to success. The game is fun, but not easy to pick up and play; it will take a while for people unfamiliar with the format to get used to it and take even longer to complete at times. The campaign is decent, but entirely unengaging, while the lack of online or local play against other players is a glaring omission when you consider that its main inspiration is all about playing against someone else to test your military prowess.

Rating ★★★☆☆



Price: **£0.69/$0.99**
Developer: Sega America

ChuChu Rocket!



Released to great acclaim on Sega's Dreamcast console in 1999, ChuChu Rocket! deserves a place in all puzzle gamers' collections. The concept is simple enough: guide a collection of cartoon mice into space rockets before either time runs out or they're eaten by equally cartoon cats. The execution is anything but, spanning battle, puzzle and challenge modes, each testing a different pace of skill. The control system isn't well suited to competitive play, but there's plenty here to enjoy besides that. Fans of this game's previous incarnations will no doubt lap it up, but it remains as engaging as it ever did and will welcome newcomers with open arms. As a light diversion and brain teaser you could do a lot worse than pick this up.

Rating ★★★★☆



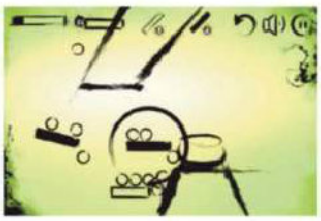
Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

Deal or No Deal



Deal Or No Deal makes about as much sense as a videogame adaptation as it does in real life; that is to say, not much. Though lacking in reality (or a Noel Edmonds avatar whose head possesses more than about four polygons), this digital adaptation does offer something to players the show doesn't – a chance to become the banker. Sadly, this proves to be just as mathematical a process as you might expect, rendering this a videogame about the schadenfreude of non-existent people. Now when you think about it, that's just weird. As such it carries some appeal for a short while and if you're utterly devoted to the show you may enjoy it, but it won't last you very long and will be quickly forgotten.

Rating ★★☆☆☆



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Clickgamer

Ink Ball HD



Sometimes, superficially generic iOS games are capable of surprising. After all, it appears that gamers are to be treated here to a relatively straightforward World Of Goo clone. In actual fact, events prove quite different, if a little lacking in variety. The task is to guide a quota of bounding balls towards their destination pot, with only elastic and solid surfaces at your disposal. Sadly, there's little scope within this concept, meaning that each puzzle's most obvious solution will often be its best, but there's certainly some joy to its simplicity. There's also much to be said for its wonderful styling, which really helps to make it stand out from the crowd. It's great art direction like this that makes so many iOS games a joy to spend time with.

Rating ★★★★☆



Price: £1.99/$2.99
Developer: Prophetic Sky, Inc

Knights vs Aliens



It's nice when a game exceeds your expectations, and Knights vs Aliens is more fun than its screenshots might suggest. You're tasked with taking over towers for your faction, first by sending troops to pacify the neutral locals, then by holding them against the onslaught of aliens. Bigger towers bring bigger armies, but you'll need more force to capture them, leading to some fast-paced action as both sides go for the low-hanging fruit before clashing as they go for each other's bases. It may have a pretty stupid name, but it delivers where it counts in the gameplay department and has enough about it to make you come back again and again for more. If only all the stupidly named apps on the App Store could be as good as this.

Rating ★★★★☆



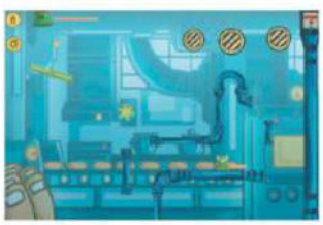
Price: £1.49/$1.99
Developer: BULKYPIX

Cardboard Castle HD



The tactility of the iPad's screen makes Cardboard Castle a perfect partner to the device, while the charming visuals and storyline are entertaining enough. It's a wonderful app to spend time staring at, although it doesn't necessarily deliver to the same high standard on every front. Each scene asks that you help the knight travel from the left of the screen to the right, battling opponents, crossing chasms and prodding cows. Experimentation is the name of the game, though this is quickly undone when the majority of later puzzles need less cognitive thought and more trial-and-error. This is a crying shame, because in so many other respects it's a real winner, but it can't sustain the quality long enough.

Rating ★★★☆☆



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Appgeneration, Software Technologies, Lda

Crazy Donuts



While we're not sure what makes these donuts crazy (besides their inherent bounciness), they do make for an entertaining puzzle game. The task is to place each of the contraptions around a level to reflect the donuts safely into the waiting mouth of a monster. Unfortunately, not every donut seems to bounce in the same way, which can be a nuisance in later levels that ask you to navigate more complex level designs. In fact, you may simply resort to nudging each donut around the course due to its wildly unfair physics. Perhaps that's where the crazy element is supposed to come into play, but we'd just call it being a nuisance. Perhaps a little more craziness was actually what was in order after all.

Rating ★★★☆☆



Price: £2.49/$3.99
Developer: Kairosoft Co., Ltd

Pocket Academy



Created by the same company behind such popular business sims as Game Dev Story and Hot Springs Story, Pocket Academy puts you in control of a school and asks you to build it up from nothing to a world-class institute. While the aim of those other games was to make as much money as possible, Pocket Academy is about striving to produce academic excellence in the students. This makes it a more complex game, with many more variables. It may be a more complicated and demanding sim, but it's a satisfying one and ultimately while the goal may be different you're handling roughly the same kinds of ideas. Keep earning resources and investing them back into the Academy to make it the very best in the world.

Rating ★★★★★



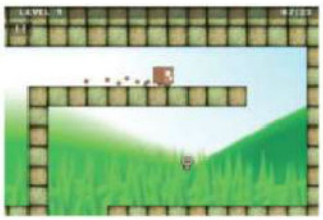
Price: Free
Developer: Jirbo, Inc

Tap Reef HD



There're quite a few fish games available in the App Store, but Tap Reef HD was one of the few tailored specifically for the iPad that makes use of its larger screen. It's quite good fun looking after and breeding your fish inside the nicely rendered tank, but there isn't much to do without, you guessed it, spending real money to buy new things. These aren't just any in-app purchases though. There's the option of buying 1200 pearls for $99.99, and we seriously wonder how many parents will find that their kids have racked up a huge bill by mistake. Hopefully not too many, but whether or not you choose to spend some cash on this game it will give you a few minutes relief from time to time and for free is probably worth a look just to make up your mind.

Rating ★★★½☆



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Alejandro Jimenez Vilarroya

Choco Run



Drawing heavy inspiration from indie console and PC release Super Meat Boy, Choco Run is a difficult platform game, with each level littered with a gauntlet of spikes, hazards and traps. Choco can run and jump off walls to reach higher areas, and while this is similar to Super Meat Boy, the control system feels imprecise, unlike its inspiration. Choco runs forwards automatically, making it difficult to navigate with accuracy. That leaves you to think only about leaping, not unlike a number of platformers already on iOS devices such as Canabalt. It remains a lot of fun to play, but the frustrations of the controls do take a lot of the shine off it and frankly if you're familiar with this game's inspiration then you'll be left wishing the real thing had made the leap over instead.

Rating ★★★½☆



Price: £1.99/$2.99
Developer: NEXON MOBILE

MapleStory: Cygnus Knights Edition



Sometimes it's difficult to imagine why iOS game developers charge so little for massive games. MapleStory: Cygnus Knights Edition is as big as some full-price console releases, but currently falls under one of the lowest price brackets. It's a huge role-playing title that follows your hero's journey to become a great warrior. This is part of an ongoing series, but marks an introduction to many of its characters, so it's a good place to start if you want to get into things. With tons of quests and townspeople to speak to as well as plenty of minigames and side distractions to enjoy, you can play this for hours on end and still never dent it. For this sort of money you couldn't really ask for a better value investment.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £2.99/$4.99
Developer: Crescent Moon Games LLC

Pocket RPG



If you're a fan of Japanese-style RPGs, then look away now, as Pocket RPG isn't for you. Instead, this is more like the role playing games you'd find on a PC, like Diablo or Torchlight. The combat is simple and repetitive – just mindless hacking and slashing that involves zero strategy – but the dungeon exploration and loot collecting is where it's at. If you're the sort of person who gets addicted to finding new equipment and outfitting your character, then you'll definitely get a kick out of Pocket RPG as it happens to do it very well. It doesn't have the tactical play and challenge that some might want, but in terms of exploration and adventure this is another great example of RPG gaming on iPad that any fan of the genre would do well to pick up and play.

Rating ★★★★½



Price: Free
Developer: 99Games

Prison Mayhem



Prison Mayhem is a bit of a confused game that ends up part management sim and part race against the clock. The whole game is powered by its unlocking system. Unlock new tiles to calm prisoners, prison priests and so on, yet this still translates to the same game of dragging static prisoners into coloured cells and fetching food. It doesn't quite click the way it should, but it looks slick, the controls are easy enough, and the complete absence of a price ensures it's worth a try if you're after something new. Just don't go in expecting to find an experience akin to Prison Break or some other long forgotten TV show. The longer term appeal of this game is sorely lacking and you'll probably move on from it pretty quickly in the end.

Rating ★★★½☆



Price: £4.99/$6.99
Developer: Gameloft S.A.

Order & Chaos



Considering the costs involved – subscriptions are just £0.69/$0.99 a month – you'd be forgiven for thinking Order & Chaos is just an MMO-lite, but anyone who's played World Of Warcraft will find similarities here. This is a quite remarkable achievement as MMOs on iOS go. Controls are handled perfectly too, with prods to select targets, movement through the on-screen analogue pad and a concealable menu to hide away items, abilities and spells. Interface problems can make equipping items and deselecting enemies an issue, but it's a minor one considering the scale of the game. The whole experience is incredibly deep and rewarding as well as being one of the best examples of online gaming you'll find on any mobile device. Well worth your time and money.

Rating ★★★★★



Price: £0.69/$0.99
Developer: Si-Yeon Kim

Angry Zombies



If, like us, you sigh at the mere mention of yet another score attack zombie game, then you'll probably want to know what the difference is here. Well, rather than killing the shuffling dead, you are instead trying to escape them. In fact, you'll have to evade one particularly zombie, whose attacks – from speedy bolts across the screen to chasing you with a bulldozer – require fast reactions and even faster control over your helpless victim. It makes for a pleasant enough change, but not such a drastic one as to really have this game stand out from the crowd (or should that be horde?). Despite the budget veneer, there's plenty of challenge here for those who enjoy the addiction of a good score attack game so at least it has that going for it.

Rating ★★★½☆



Price: Free
Developer: GAMEVIL USA, Inc

Colosseum



On your first play of Colosseum, it appears like a considered, if not simple, hack-and-slash game and that's exactly what you get. Upgradable equipment means there's plenty of choice, while the smooth animation and graphics make it a joy to play. Each stage pits you against wave after wave of opponents, scoring you extra gold to spend on improved weaponry. This cycle continues endlessly against very few enemy types, and with increasingly familiar locations. So while combat works well, the lack of variety leads to a lot of repetition and in the end that's what is going to kill your long term enjoyment of this game. For the short term though (and for free, let's not forget) you'll find there's plenty to enjoy about this game and to come back to.

Rating ★★★★½

Trivia/Words



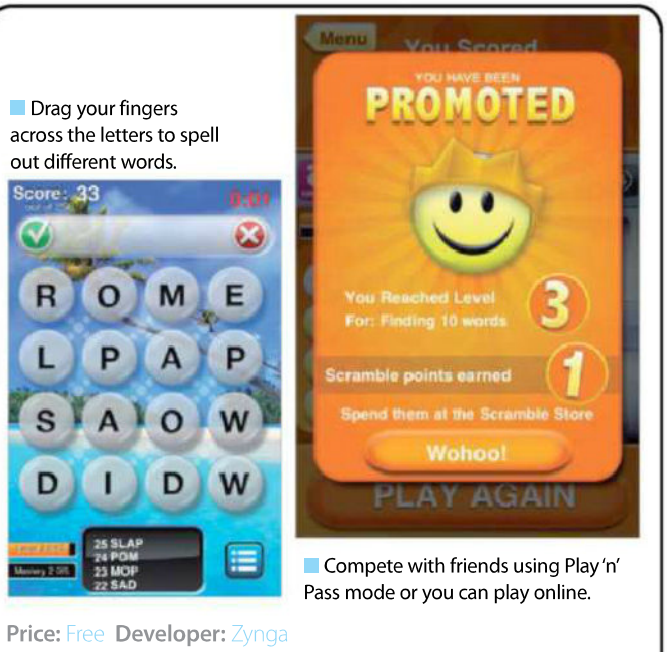
Perhaps giving your brain a little workout as well as being a lot of fun, word and trivia games are the perfect genre for gaming on the go. Whether on a bus or between ad breaks, they'll always deliver.

Top Paid Apps	Top Free Apps
Words With Friends HD ★★★★★	US States Quizzle ★★★★½
WordFu ★★★★	Best Buds the Drinking Game ★★★★½
Scene It? Movies ★★★★★	Trivia Quest ★★★★½

Staff pick of the section

WordJong ★★★★★

Boggle ★★★★★



Drag your fingers across the letters to spell out different words.

Compete with friends using Play 'n' Pass mode or you can play online.

Price: Free **Developer:** Zynga

Word Scramble 2

Find the words with your finger before the time runs out

Who on earth thinks traditional word searches are fun? Sure, when you were just learning the English language at an early age it may have been novel, but now it just seems like the answers have already been provided for you by comparison to better challenges like crosswords. Then comes Word Scramble, a neat reworking of the word search genre that owes as much to the iPhone's touch interface as it does to any form of ingenuity.

The process is simple: a grid of letters appears on screen and you glide your finger over them in the correct order to spell out words. Sounds simple, but there's also a timer involved to make it more frantic. High scores are sent to an online leaderboard and you can play online with others or simply pass your iPhone between friends. To truly grasp the excitement and fun of Word Scramble you have to play it. So, as it's free, what are you waiting for?

Rating ★★★★½

Price: £1.99/$2.99 Developer: Ludia

The Price Is Right

Contestant number one… come on down!

Unlike more standard videogames consoles, the iPhone and App Store benefit from being able to offer a more diverse range of products. Rather than just put out the usual humdrum stuff, you get more quirky entries, like *The Price Is Right*. Why anyone would want to re-create the popular game show (presented by Bruce Forsyth in the United Kingdom) we don't know, but if you do fit this category you may be surprised at what greets you on the other side of this download. It actually recaptures the show very well.



The contestants all look strange, especially Rose, who seems constantly perplexed.



The Price Is Right's longevity comes from its mini-games, such as Plinko.

Every aspect – from the mini-games you'll be playing to the presentation – is near identical to what was seen on television making this, peculiarly, the ultimate in fan service. There's a fair amount here too: as well as participating in the classic Contestant's Row, where you have to guess how much a certain item costs, you get to play 16 pricing games including Plinko, Cliff Hangers and Punch-A-Bunch. Obviously playing by yourself would lack the competitive edge of the show, so Ludia has also correctly included a four-player option. It lacks any real test as you can't win any real prizes, but find three friends who love a good contest and you're bound to be distracted for a little while.

Unfortunately, from a non-US standpoint, you may be a little disappointed with some of the products you're asked to price. There's a distinct American feel, and you may need quite a broad knowledge to realise that Chips Ahoy is a box of cookies. We're also a little dubious about how much it thinks things should cost…

So, while *The Price Is Right* is certainly fun, and a nice nostalgic trip for anyone who remembers watching it in their youth, there's not too much here to truly keep you going for a prolonged period. If it didn't have the name to carry it, we doubt it could justify the current asking price – there are better quiz games already out there, which are far cheaper. Of course, they won't be as familiar so if you don't dare take the risk, this will still give you some kicks.

Rating ★★★☆☆



The presentation is so in tune with the television product, we imagine anyone who loved the show will be pleased.

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Screenlife LLC

Scene It? Movies

You may have seen it, but can you Scene It? Find out with this puzzler

Some movie scenes stick with you forever, but can you remember the film they were from? You'll need to muster all of your Hollywood knowledge if you want to compete at Scene It? Movies. Gathering video clips and images from the past three decades of the silver screen, the app offers an exciting mixture of different game types.

The game is designed well and offers a polished interface that makes it easy to answer questions and interact with the various mini-games you face throughout each level. These games are presented in a variety of ways with video clips from popular films, character matching and movie posters all used to great effect. Our favourite games are those that feature childish drawings or pixelated animations depicting a scene from a movie which the user then has to guess.

Most of the question-based rounds provide multiple choice answers but that doesn't mean the game is easy. If you haven't seen a film, guess work and common sense will have to come in to play for your answering, with all points scored on the time it took you to answer correctly.

One element we really didn't appreciate in Scene It? Movies is the rather gratuitous Buy Now button that appears after a number of questions, especially those with movie clips. The button takes you to another page that contains links to Amazon and other online retailers who sell the film. We don't mind a little bit of advertising thrown in to apps, but the button is a little too intrusive and all too easy to click on in the haste of gameplay.

Aside from this minor flaw, Scene It? Movies is an ideal companion for a long journey or as a fun game to play with friends. There's no iPad app available at present but we did test this version on an iPad and found the results to be quite acceptable.

For such a small fee, this is a well made and enjoyable app with plenty of repeat play. Certainly one to consider if you like your trivia with a cinematic twist.

Rating ★★★★★



Prepare to remember key quotes from your favourite films, some of which are pretty obvious and some of which require a true film fan's memory.



There are multiple types of game available from the main menu, giving you a nice amount of variety here.



You need to make use of all the iPhone's features to answer questions in this great little Scene It? Movies app.

Shake And Ask

It doesn't get much simpler than this Magic 8-ball clone

Price: Free **Developer:** Caluliber S.R.L





Ask a question and shake your iPhone for an answer





Have you ever needed to make a decision or have a question answered but been caught short without a coin to flip or a person to ask? If you answered 'yes' to that question then let Shake And Ask answer the rest for you. Just like the Magic 8-balls we all had as kids, which uncannily gave responses to yes or no questions, Shake And Ask offers the same entertainment, albeit for a short period. A strange collection of answers – in our experience mostly negative – are offered once you touch the screen, turn the iPhone upside down and shake it. We don't want to bash free apps too much and this one is a bit of fun, but it's also rather pointless beyond a couple of initial attempts at solving whatever problems you're having. We even discovered spelling errors in some of Shake And Ask's responses, which, if we were the superstitious type, might have shaken our faith in randomly generated answers.

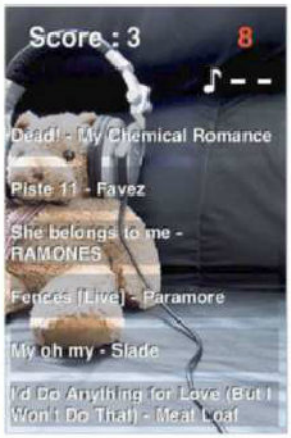
Rating ★★☆☆☆

Tune Buster

How well do you know your own music library? This app will let you

Price: £1.49/$1.99 **Developer:** Stephane Lecorney





Select from the available difficulty levels or challenge a friend.



Click-wheel iPods still contain a game very similar to this one for free so it's a little galling to fork out money for the same thing on iPod Touch and iPhone. That bugbear aside, Tune Buster is a decent variant on the genre for the touch-screen generation. With three difficulty levels as well as a two-player option, the game plays tracks found in your music library and offers you multiple choice answers scored by how quickly you name the right song. Drawing track information from your device personalises the quiz, but it does have its drawbacks. For example, if you have incorrectly named or unnamed tracks in your library, the available answers won't make much sense. The game cannot differentiate between spoken word and music tracks either making things a little more confusing. For the price, this game doesn't offer as much as we thought it might, but if you're confident you have a tidy music collection you may well find some value here.

Rating ★★★☆☆

Price: Free Developer: YitYat Studios

Trivia Quest

Learn something new every day

What novel was a satire of Leibniz's "best of all possible worlds" philosophy? What is the genus of rats? Thomas Edison electrocuted an elephant to show the danger of what? In Hemingway's A Farewell To Arms, what is the character's main job? In American football, what is a red dog also known as? These are just a small selection of the questions put forward by this neat little app, which has proved itself to be an addictive addition to the iPhone catalogue.

Aside from being a mere game, Trivia Quest also utilises Apple's push technology, giving users a daily trivia titbit at a programmed time. Some of the questions are also nicely supplemented by 'fun facts' that give users further details on a particular subject. It's touches like these that elevate Trivia Quest above the rest.

Rating ★★★★★



Test your general knowledge daily with iPhone's push technology.

Unfussy design gives Trivia Quest a basic appearance.

Price: £1.49/$1.99 Developer: Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

Boggle

Almost like playing the real thing

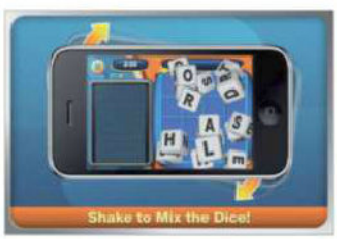
Considering how many quirky offshoots of Boggle there are in the App Store, we really shouldn't like Electronic Arts' more basic version. After all, everything from the look and feel of it is identical to the actual game that disappoints youngsters every Christmas. Being from EA, though, it manages to thrive.

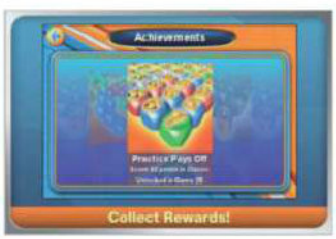
Boggle's biggest positive is, as already mentioned, how in-tune with the original idea it is – you even shake the iPhone to shuffle the three-dimensional cubes. Add in the three modes that guarantee to keep things interesting – even though they're all essentially the same – and it's easily as good as the best within the genre.

It's also nice to see EA being competitive with its prices. Before apps became the norm, the videogame giant couldn't be considered cheap. Now, it has nailed the execution and pricing, leaving it to continue its dominance on all of gaming.



It's Boggle in nearly every sense of the word, from the colour scheme to the 3D tiles.





Nearly every gimmick on your iPhone is put to good use.

Rating ★★★★½

Price: £1.49/$1.99 Developer: Electronic Arts Nederland B.V.

Scrabble

When once a year at Christmas just isn't enough

Elsewhere in this handy guide to iPhone games you'll find a review of another popular game developed by EA known as Boggle. Despite heavy competition, the use of the official name and Electronic Arts' skill when it comes to making a product shine thanks to a sleek presentation and well-realised gameplay makes it a viable choice. With Scrabble, the same idea rings true.

Arguably, there are more clones of the veteran word-based game than any other available for iPhone and the licensed version manages to hang with every one of them. As you'd imagine, the touch interface works wonders, allowing flicking tiles around the screen to be done with ease. Of course, this is the case for nearly every Scrabble submission on the market. EA stands stronger than most where multiplayer is concerned.

Much like you'd expect from a handheld gaming device, every opportunity has been made to ensure all forms of multiplayer play are available. Rather than just focus on one and be done with it, it's possible to challenge a friend over a local network, Wi-Fi, and even through Facebook. Using notifications to let you know when it's your turn, it almost steals the thunder from apps like Words With Friends by offering the same premise but with a whole lot more to boot. Obviously, independent iterations won't come with the same asking price but if you're willing to spend a bit more, this edition is, arguably, the best.

More evidence of this is clear when you discover how well-rounded EA's attempt is. Aspects such as the 'Teacher Feature' turn a frustrating game into an enjoyable one by showing what your best word choice would be while the in-game dictionary – a trait missing from 90 per cent of the competition – is an absolute treat. There's nothing worse than typing in a word only to be told it doesn't exist, making you rue the day you wasted money on an app that's causing nothing but aggravation. This simple addition ensures such rage is never apparent.

Electronic Arts has proved it has the knowhow to be just as successful on iPhone as it is in other areas of the gaming stratosphere with apps as good as this one.

Rating ★★★★★





It works just as well on the iPhone as it does on a board.



Scrabble handles multiplayer in a multitude of ways.

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Newtoy, Inc

Words With Friends HD

An app to disrupt your entire life…

This app has got such a stealth following it's even been called "the new Twitter" by John Mayer, no less. If you haven't heard of it here's a brief summary. In its most basic form it's online Scrabble – but the push notification system, ability to play friends or a random stranger, as well as the option to play as many games as you like concurrently makes this an addictive application that could quickly disrupt your entire life. Every time that push notification comes through you feel compelled to see which opponent has done what and respond.



Waiting for a move to be made can be torturous as you await your

In terms of the game itself, as we said earlier it's a subtle variation on Scrabble with a slightly different board where each player has a set of letters they use to create words, adding to letters that are already on the board. The object of the game is to score more points than the opposition by either using higher rated letters or by laying words so they cover the bonus squares. There is an iPhone version and the big difference with the iPad one, other than the incredibly sharp graphics, is that the enjoyment of this game will hinge on the type of iPad you have and when you're able to use it. 3G iPad users will get more from this app as they can take their go at any time; Wi-Fi only iPad owners may find this game a little more limiting, as they'll have to be on a hotspot or on their home Wi-Fi to take turns.

Nonetheless, the thrill of destroying complete strangers in a battle of words or the anticipation of seeing how far up the world leaderboard you've climbed after the last few victories is what makes this game incredibly hard to put down. Scrabble is pretty old hat and should anyone break out the old-school board and challenge us to a game we'd probably decline, but if we get a message from an anonymous player in *Words With Friends* we just cannot refuse the challenge.

Rating ★★★★★



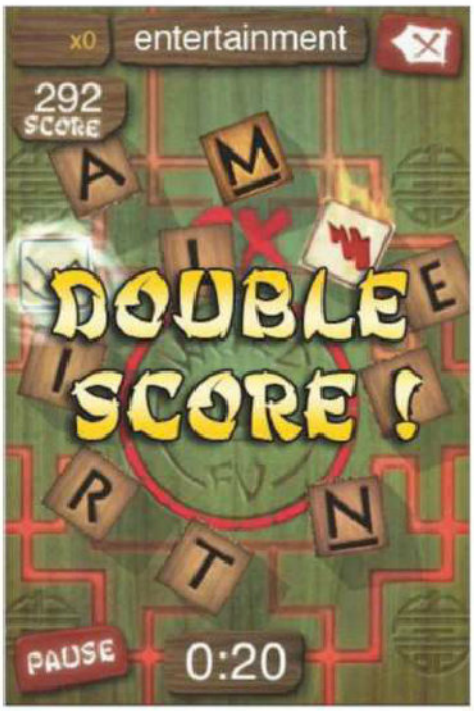
The board and the game are simple to understand and play too.





An addictive game, but you'll get more out of it if you have 3G.

Defeating strangers with huge words is as satisfying as it gets.





The ability to freeze time provides the opportunity for a breather when the timer gets near the end and you're trying to eke out a few more points.

Bet you can't guess what the 'Double Score' bonus does.

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: ngmoco, Inc

WordFu

Everything is better with ninjas… even Boggle

Although there is now an official version of Boggle, it's iPhone developer extraordinaire ngmoco that has produced the definitive dice-based word game with this charming little puzzler. WordFu takes that format, throws in some neat twists, and themes it all in an old chopsocky kung-fu movie style, meaning stereotypically oriental music and plenty of Bruce Lee-style yelps as you play.

Fundamentally it is just Boggle – not that it's a bad thing – with high-scoring words netting bonuses that freeze the counter or double your score. It uses the iPhone's interface extremely well, letting you tap on dice, flick them to move them, and shake the whole phone to either shuffle them or submit a word, keeping the on-screen interface to a minimum.

Add integration with Facebook and Twitter for comparing scores or issuing challenges and you have the perfect game for quick rounds on the bus or between meetings. And WordFu is an absolute steal for so little money.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: Free Developer: ByteClub LLC

Scramboni

A must-have for anagram fans

In theory, Scramboni should not be a good game. Asking nothing more than to solve anagrams, it gets its plaudits from putting a time limit and a wealth of opponents directly in front of you. Requiring an internet connection, ByteClub's puzzler delivers an anagram, goading you into solving it quicker than anyone else in the room. The straightforward challenge, which is heightened by the constantly fluctuating difficulty, even manages to incorporate some RPG mechanics. As you improve and start to top the rankings, your score will increase, giving you access to harder puzzles and, naturally, a tougher class of opponent. It's the definition of one-more-go gameplay, getting inside your head and demanding yet more time. What's better than this is the fact that it's free. We would easily have paid the usual 69p/99 cents rate, but the decision to make this available to everyone at no cost not only makes it more appealing, but also boosts the community by some degree. A very impressive package.

Rating ★★★★★





Much like an RPG, increasing your level will offer a harder contest and tougher players.

Although some words are ludicrously easy, as you progress the challenge increases.





It's always the simple games that hook you, and WordJong is near the top of the list.

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Gameblend Studios, LLC

WordJong

Possibly the most addictive game in the iPhone Store



The word genre is slowly becoming the finest the iPhone has to offer. Sure, Apple may be keen to throw around big numbers with regard to the App Store, but a selection that is truly worth playing revolves around the manipulation of words. WordJong is easily one of the best of the bunch. Presented with multiple tiles on screen, it's your job to get the highest score possible by putting letters together to form words. With its Mahjong twist, though, tiles only unveil themselves as you progress forward. The real appeal comes in the form of daily challenges. As you'd expect, a new puzzle is available every 24 hours, meaning not only do you have a huge back catalogue to attempt, but you'll also be kept entertained as the months go on. Throw in some skill-based rewards, a cast of zodiac characters with their own scores to beat and the always-nice leaderboards, and WordJong is one of the best games you can get for your iPhone.

Rating ★★★★★

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Yongkei Lei

WordSearch Unlimited

You'll never need to buy a puzzle book again



One of the iPhone's greatest strengths is its sheer versatility. You can check shelves are level, discover the name of the song you've just heard or even use it as a GPS (with the right apps of course). WordSeach Unlimited on the other hand turns your £150+ device into one of those essential puzzle books you always seem to end up with whenever you're on holiday. The difference being you'll never need to buy another again.

Virtuesoft's clever little app features a choice of background themes to play on, over 15 different subject matters and three different difficulty levels. The end result is a highly polished app that, like many score-based iPhone games, is let down by a proper online leaderboard. Unlike many of the board/pen-and-paper games covered in this book, all the hard work – creating the actual puzzles – has been done for you so you can just concentrate on having fun.

Rating ★★★☆☆



It's not the most complex game, but it does its job well.

Price: Free Developer: W3 Innovations, LLC

US States Quizzle

How well do you know your states, capitals and trivia?



It's a surprising just how little people know about the US states and this app aims to change that. With over 150 questions relating to the United States and new questions added at regular intervals, the game covers the basics such as state capital, but also throws other state-related trivia into the mix. The developer claims that it will add more questions the more five star ratings the app receives so, if you like this free app, make sure you review it highly. Regardless this is an excellent way to learn and have some fun too.



Test your knowledge of the USA and its states.

Rating ★★★★☆

Price: #0.69/$0.99 Developer: Hooray LLC

Apple Or Island

A strange concept for a quiz… still fun though



This is a pretty strange concept for a quiz app, but it is free and surprisingly fun to play. The developer claims this is a tool to help broaden your kids' minds, but adults will also find it entertaining too. Choose from three difficulty levels and then, as the title implies, determine whether the word that appears on the screen is an apple or an island. It should be really easy but it's not, and a timer for each question makes it that little bit more frantic for you. This is, indeed, fun for all the family.



Is it an apple or an island? This game is harder than you think.

Rating ★★★☆☆

Price: Free Developer: Best Buds

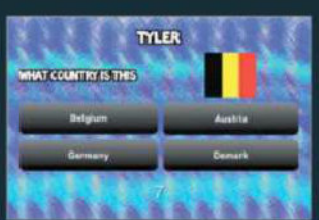
Best Buds The Drinking Game

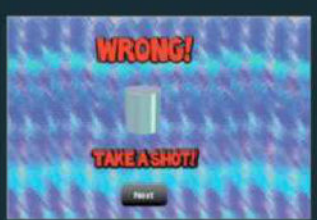
Make your trips to the pub more fun…

Please use app responsibly



We guess the developer of this app had to say that it would promote responsible drinking, but we imagine the outcome of playing Best Buds The Drinking Game will be anything but. Don't be fooled by the odd psychedelic interface; this app is a ton of fun for drinking with friends. Answer questions with up to ten players and take a drink for the questions you get wrong. Best to have your wallet and your wits about you.





Use your iPhone on your next drinking session; it should be fun.

Rating ★★★★★

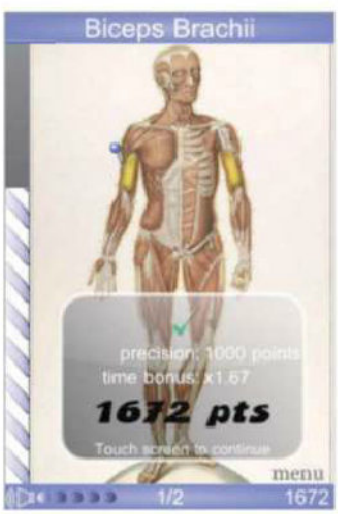
Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Benoit Essiambre

Speed Anatomy

Learn anatomy on your iPhone, ideal for students



Do you remember the biology tests you used to have to take at school? If you're studying or practising medicine or sports science you might even still be taking them. This app will be a great help for those learning or just curious about the human body.



Point out the body part on the diagram and score points for your accuracy. Combos and bonuses can also be scored as you play. At the end of the day it's a great deal cheaper than a medical dictionary and far more fun. As a learning aid you couldn't ask for much more.

Where is your Biceps Brachii? Find out with this neat app.

Rating ★★★★☆

Price: £0.69/$0.99 Developer: Gameloft S.A.

The Oregon Trail

Nothing ahead of me but open… dirt



Anyone who's played the excellent Resident Evil games will be familiar with survival-horror, but how about plain old survival? An updated port of the classic edutainment title, The Oregon Trail tasks you with guiding your family to the western frontier of the 1840s United States and a fresh start in the new territory of Oregon.

Despite the lessons in history and the pioneer experience, the game remains fun as a resource-management game. Do you buy faster oxen that will get you there before winter but consume your supplies faster? How about risking a slightly slower pace for a stronger wagon that will prove impervious to bandits? On the harder difficulties these can literally be life or death decisions as you balance the safety of your family – and it's by no means a sure thing that they'll all make it to Oregon, with everything from broken legs and snake bites to dysentery and typhoid to contend with – with the need to make good time. It will take a few hours real-time to finish your journey, but multiple routes and decisions along the way ensure replay value.

Don't assume that it's dry or boring by any means, though. Between settlements, you can top up your food supplies by hunting in a top-down shooting game, fishing is handled in a similar way, and at certain points you can shave a few days off your trip by floating down a river, tilting the iPhone to dodge rocks. You can even make money by running errands for the historical figures you come across. Iconic characters like Abraham Lincoln aside, most will only really be familiar to American players, but a bit of a history lesson never hurt anyone.

Panning for gold is by far the best of all the mini-games. Looking down on the iPhone and shuffling it from side to side, using the accelerometer to sift through the dirt for chunks of the shiny stuff, actually feels like a very authentic approximation of the real thing. Clever stuff. Couple all this with Gameloft's beautiful artwork, which is brimming with personality, and you have quite a superb update of a little-known classic.

Rating ★★★★★



Seriously, bear attacks are the least of your worries on The Oregon Trail.



Each leg of the journey has a distinct appearance, depending on the terrain and the time of year.



Shooting is fun enough, but there are better mini-games in The Oregon Trail.

Price: £1.49 /$1.99 **Developer:** ngmoco, Inc

Charadium Pro

It's Pictionary for iPhone… but it's called something different

Charadium is a lot of fun, that cannot be denied. At its most simple, you are given a word and must depict it with an image you draw using your finger on the iPhone screen for friends to guess at. The game takes on new levels of fun, however, when you play with others online using ngmoco's Plus+ network to connect to randomly selected users across the globe. Your scores are calculated and compared with a huge community of gamers and added to an online leaderboard.

With nine colours to bring your drawings to life and a huge dictionary of nouns to draw, Charadium offers tons of replay value and there are also rewards to unlock as you achieve higher scores. There are versions of Charadium for the iPhone and iPad and a free version lets you experience the addictive fun of iPhone charades with only your artistic pride at risk. So for a really great, fun app, check this out now.

Rating ★★★★★





Draw the word you are given for others to guess. Choose from nine colours and play against friends online.

It's a great, portable way to have some drawing game fun, and it looks great too.





Pick from a huge selection of crosswords from across the world.

You can get hints for particularly tricky clues.

Price: £6.99/$9.99 **Developer:** Stand Alone, Inc.

Crosswords

Exactly what you would expect from the title and much more

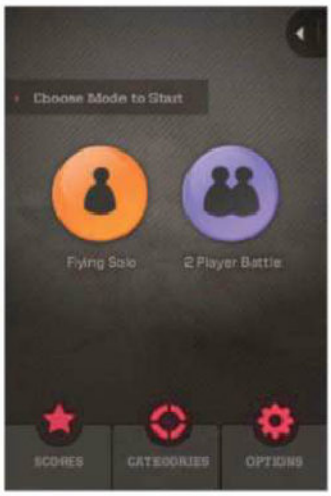
Everybody enjoys a good crossword, but one of the most annoying elements of those done in the newspapers are the mistakes you tend to make with no option to undo your error. Of course, you could use a pencil or you could get hold of the Crosswords app.

While the asking price is rather high, you do get endless crosswords to complete. Taken from the most popular sources, including the newspapers, Crosswords is a true word puzzler's dream. Whether you're after cryptic or traditional puzzles, there's a crossword for you and even hints if you get a little stuck. Unlike newspaper crosswords, you can also turn on error detection so you won't sit around questioning whether a clue is incorrect when, in fact, you've slipped up somewhere. Crossword fanatics will love this game and, considering you spend around a pound for a newspaper with one or two crosswords, the price isn't too much to ask when you think about it.

Rating ★★★½☆



As expected, every round ends with your current score…



We liked the 'battle' option but the lack of Wi-Fi is disappointing.

Price: £0.69/$0.99 **Developer:** Zephyr Creative

Trivia Wars

The war is over before it's even begun

Trivia Wars should be a sure-fire hit. You'd be hard pushed to find someone who didn't like being challenged with multiple questions, and the addition of facing off against another opponent should surely seal the deal. Alas, this weak app fails to achieve either of these fairly straightforward requests.

Zephyr Creative's biggest mistake was with the range of questions included. Admittedly the game is cheap, but we expected some localised questions to offer a more worldly flavour. Instead, 50 per cent of everything thrown at you is likely to revolve around a similar subject. There's a serious lack of diversity: geography usually revolves around American states, whereas sport often defaults to baseball. And unless you have a solid knowledge of both you're unlikely to get any real amusement out of this. To its credit there are an impressive number of categories included, along with thousands of questions and the ability to buy more from the App Store.

By far the most disappointing aspect of Trivia Wars is the limited multiplayer. We expected to be treated to some epic Wi-Fi battles, allowing us to take on an opponent whenever and wherever, but instead Trivia Wars relies on Bluetooth – not the iPhone's biggest strength. This means that if you're desperate for a battle, you'll have to find someone else with the app ready and waiting on their phone. Convenient this isn't.



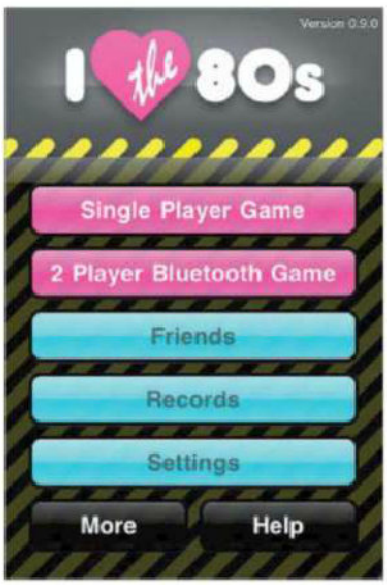
Although the odd interesting question pops up, the majority are a little lacklustre.

Just to make things worse, it's also shockingly slow. Rather than firing questions at you, increasing the excitement and pressure, it's a painful slog that often frustrates. The pace of each game leaves you feeling irritated as a lot of your time is spent tapping the screen, hoping proceedings will quicken.

Like all quiz games, the entertainment comes from how successfully a player is challenged, and Trivia Wars is definitely hit and miss. Nevertheless, if you believe you have a remarkable knack for general knowledge then this may well keep you partly amused. However, if we were you, we'd save up those pennies and opt for something with a little more oomph.

Rating ★★☆☆☆

VH1's I Love The 80s Trivia



How many Eighties entertainment questions can you answer?



Connect with friends and play via Bluetooth.

Price: Free **Developer:** MTV Networks

Whether you love the Eighties or not, you'll love this app

Now this is how iPhone apps should be made: stylish, fun and free. *VH1's I Love The 80s Trivia* doesn't try to sell you its MTV music channel either; sure, it does include plugs to the channel's website, but you'll hardly notice that when you get involved with the game at hand.

First up, the app looks great, with well-used transparencies and a smattering of the neon blues and pinks that were a staple throughout the decade. The game itself is fun and remains on topic, with entertaining comments using Eighties catchphrases when you answer a question right or wrong.

It's not all multiple choice questions either; certain levels require you to drag images into place or make connections between stars and movies. Multiplayer games can be played over Bluetooth with two iPhones and extra question packs can be purchased within the app. A really cool retro app that delivers its content well, and just happens to be a well made game too.

Rating ★★★★★

Word Or Not?

Never come to blows over Scrabble again with this free app

We've all been there, you're placing your seven letter, game-winning tiles onto the Scrabble board and your opponent exclaims, "That's not a word!" Rather than argue, why not use *Word Or Not?* instead?

By checking the official TWL06 and SOWPODS Scrabble tournament dictionaries (we didn't know that's what they were called either) simultaneously, the app can settle even the most heated of word game disputes. Regardless of whether you're online or not, a simple Yes or No can be gleaned by simply typing your word into the app's clean interface and, when online, you can also visit Dictionary.com. This is a simple, free app that's purpose is well executed. We do have one further suggestion, however. Make sure you decide which tournament rules you'll be following before you start the game otherwise you'll find yourself in a whole new world of arguments.

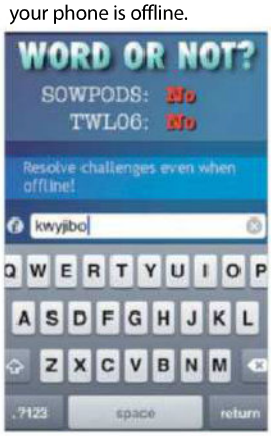
Rating ★★★★½

Price: Free **Developer:** John Evanson



Check your Scrabble words with official tournament dictionaries and stop all those potential arguments.

Find if your word is legitimate even when your phone is offline.



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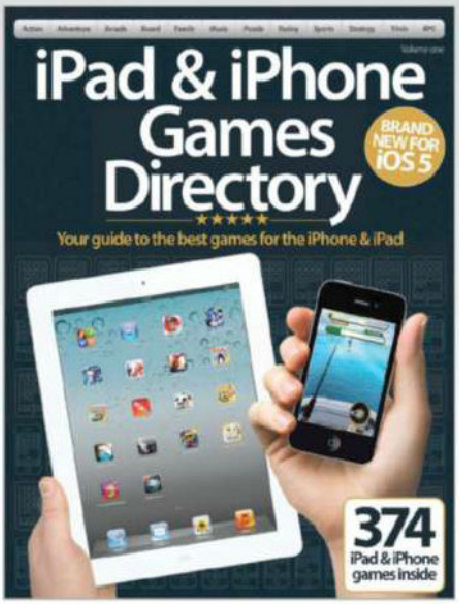
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